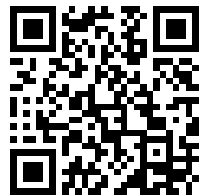

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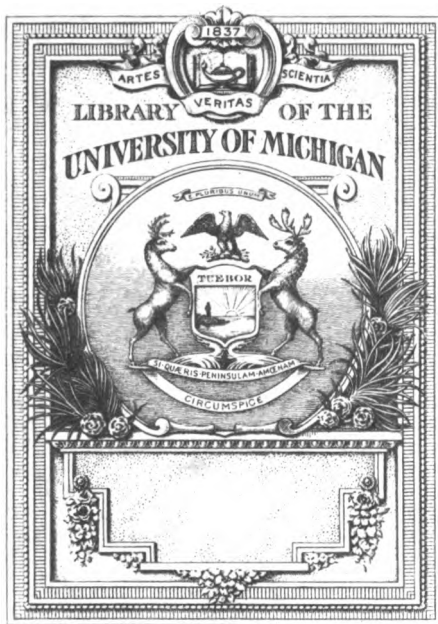


HELD BY THE
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L. E. VINING, MAJOR, R.E.

[Frontispiece.]

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HELD BY THE BOLSHEVIKS

THE DIARY OF A BRITISH
OFFICER IN RUSSIA, 1919-1920

BY

MAJOR L. E. VINING, I.S.R.

Illustrated

LONDON

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S.E.



INTRODUCTORY NOTE BY THE AUTHOR

WHEN writing this diary I had no intention of publishing it. I simply started and maintained writing it up, knowing that I was in for an exceedingly interesting trip, and a unique experience from the time of leaving Glasgow to the time I returned from Russia, and wanted, for my own future amusement, to keep a record of everything that happened on the trip.

My expectations have been realised as regards the interesting and unique experiences, as in addition to recording the numerous incidents which occurred during the trip through the Malay States, China, Manchuria, Mongolia, and Siberia, I had the misfortune to be swept along with the tide of the Russian White Army's Great Retreat, until with fourteen British officers and other ranks I was taken a prisoner of war by the Bolsheviks, and after being held prisoner for ten months and imprisoned in Moscow was finally repatriated, and returned to England through Finland and Denmark.

My fellow "jail birds" and others knew I was maintaining this diary, and assisted me in concealing parts of it and smuggling them out of Russia. I promised to give each member of the party a copy, as there is nothing of a private nature in it.

Since my arrival in England other people have heard of this diary and are anxious to obtain copies, and as I cannot possibly furnish unlimited copies, I have agreed to allow it to be published just as it stands. I cannot possibly go through twenty months of work and alter it to make it more suitable for publication, nor can I turn it into a literary work even if I felt capable of doing so. The diary must go to press as it is, in my own unaltered words—words written under exceptional difficulties, and with no attempt made to frame them into specially chosen or correct phrases.

This is not a "work" on the subject of Bolshevism, nor is there any attempt made at propaganda—it is just a diary written without any object in view other than the one already stated.

I feel sincerely flattered at being encouraged to publish my diary by people who—shall I say—like it; and I cannot but feel

gratified to think that the fruits of my toil (and it has been a very great toil) may interest and amuse others than myself.

There are countless incidents I have not dared to record in this diary, as the lives of numerous people still in Russia might be greatly endangered. Perhaps when the air in Russia clears I will put my notes at the disposal of those who would care to read them ; for the present I serve up this "pudding" and hope you will like it.

L. E. VINING.

**NAMES OF THE BRITISH OFFICERS, N.C.O.'S AND
MEN WHO WERE IMPRISONED IN MOSCOW.**

Major L. E. VINING

Captain B. HORROCKS, M.C.

Captain G. HAYES

Captain PRICKETT

Lieutenant OSBORNE-DEMPSTER, M.C.

Second-Lieutenant STEPHENS

Second-Lieutenant EYFORD

R.S.M. WALTERS

R.S.M. MACMILLAN

Sergeant ROONEY

Sergeant ILLINGWORTH

Sergeant LILLINGTON

Private JAMES

Private SMITH

Private GRANT

Class of 1920
Seth.
1-15-25
11089

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CHAPTER I

THE VOYAGE FROM GLASGOW

RECEIVED orders from the War Office to proceed to Glasgow to embark on s.s. *Stentor*, at 12 o'clock noon on March 3rd, 1919. Arrived in Glasgow on 8th, and found ship had postponed sailing until 13th.

March 12th.—Ran up to Edinburgh and visited the Castle and saw the Regalia of Scotland. Also visited Holyrood Palace and saw the rooms occupied by Mary Queen of Scots and Lord Darnley.

March 13th.—Took my kit down to the boat and, together with Naval and Military Embarkation Officers, inspected ship and allotted cabins.

I got a nice cabin to myself as I was appointed O.C. troops.

March 14th.—Left dock at 9 a.m., and steamed down the Clyde. All manner of craft under construction, from "Tramps" to submarines and super-Dreadnoughts.

Shortly after leaving dock we saw the largest airship in the world, R.34, make its maiden trip.

She had been waiting to make her trial trip for some days, but unable to do so owing to strong winds.

She came close over the ship, and we all were able to have a good look at her.

March 15th.—Sea fairly calm, one or two officers absent from meals.

March 16th.—Sea rougher, with Atlantic swell on—more officers and men "sleeping it off"—reminds me of the story of the five Tommies on board a transport who were leaning over the rails taking a deep interest in the sea and incidentally feeding the fishes.

During a particularly noisy chorus the wife of one of the Tommies went up to her husband and sympathetically put her arm round him and said, "Poor old Harry, you *have* got a weak stomach"! Back came an indignant answer: "Weak stomach be damned, I'm *throwing* as far as the rest"!

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March 17th.—Went into Havre to pick up three officers and 450 men of the Chinese Labour Corps.

Went ashore to see the Embarkation Officer.

After seeing him, strolled back to the ship, only to find the gangway up and the ship putting out to sea.

I got hold of a small boat, and was rowed out to intercept ship.

A ladder was flung out, and I seized it as the ship went past, and swarmed up on to the deck amidst cheers.

No damage done save half a crown poorer owing to dropping it into ready palm of boatman.

March 18th.—Well into Bay of Biscay. A gale blowing and very rough. Sea washing over ship. A lot of officers looking very green.

March 19th.—Played bridge steadily since embarking. One officer we have nicknamed "Two-and-threepence," as that is the sum he loses daily.

This is a small boat, no deck room at all—not built to accommodate passengers. No piano, and time drags heavily.

March 20th.—Passed Cape Finisterre—still very rough, officers still green.

Played bridge most of the day. "Two-and-threepence" maintained his name nobly, and ended the day nine points at threepence a hundred, to the bad, exactly—loud cheers.

March 21st.—Rounded Cape St. Vincent, now making for Gibraltar. A "sweep" got up, at a bob a time, as to exact time ship signals her name to the Rock. Weather improving and seas abating; fiddles removed from tables, much to everyone's joy.

March 22nd.—Arrived off the Rock at 10.39, and signalled our name; as luck will have it, old "Two-and-threepence" won the "sweep," and also halved the "sweep" on the run of the ship for the past twenty-four hours. He also won at bridge—he says it is *not* his birthday to-day.

Sea calm and bright sunshine. Saw some whales off Trafalgar Bay and near the Rock, two of them were spouting, but don't know what about.

Schools of porpoises playing round the ship; one of the marines insisted on calling them "poor pussies"—perhaps he's right.

Had rifle inspection. Thought it best to serve out rifles when we took on the Chinks at Havre—as we have both the Northern and Cantonese Chinks on board, and, to say the least of it, the two sects despise each other. The smallest jibe leads

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to an uproar, and the presence of a few armed men will doubtless weigh in our favour if it comes to having to coax John Chink to down knives.

March 23rd.—Nice day and sea calm. Had service on board. A chief petty officer led the choir with a flute. Old "Two-and-threepence," a naval officer, the M.O., and myself make up one table for meals.

Good-natured chaff passes between "Two-and-threepence" and the representative of the Royal Navy. They "sit up" for each other, and some really witty shafts fly about.

Last night the Royal Navy got in a beauty at "Two-and-threepence"; unfortunately the jest would not bear repeating in a drawing-room, but even in the face of this drawback it received uproarious applause. I felt certain that "Two-and-threepence" would get his own back, and said so at the time with the hopes that "Two-and-threepence" would not feel he was defeated.

My expectations and hopes were fully realised this morning.

As we sat down to breakfast the conversation centred on the question of safety razors.

"Two-and-threepence" said that, talking of safety razors, it was an extraordinary thing that no one had been able to invent a contrivance for removing the hairs from pork, and that an implement like a safety razor had been tried on a dead pig without success.

Royal Navy unsuspectingly said that a safety razor *should* be able to shave the hair off a pig. "Yes," said "Two-and-threepence," "one would think so, but a safety razor can shave the hair off anything except a pig."

"But I don't see that that follows," said Royal Navy, "some people cannot shave their own hair off with a safety razor. I can't, for one."

"Only pigs," said "Two-and-threepence," and a howl of laughter greeted the success of the trap into which Royal Navy had floundered.

The Chinks very perky this morning. Some I noticed with orange peel stuffed up their nostrils. This they do when they have a cold, and very lovely is the effect when taken together with their natural good looks.

Swatted up Russian to-day with the aid of Hugo's text-books and one of my N.C.O.'s who is a Russian, and is a very great help to me.

Am very inclined to use Urdu words when I get stuck for a Russian one.

Another five days to Port Said. It's only a month or two

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ago since I was in camp there. I loathe the place, but am looking forward to stretching my legs.

March 24th, 25th, and 26th.—Same old routine life breakfast, Russian lesson, beer at eleven o'clock, 12.30 lunch—then a nap until teatime, then bridge till dinner time, and afterwards arguments until weariness drives one off to bed. No music—a banjo and flute for'ard, so seldom hear them.

March 27th.—The Chinks up for'ard are Cantonese, and evidently the Jews of the John Chinaman class. The Chinks aft are Northerners, and for centuries have been systematically "rooked" by their Southern brothers.

With the foul intention of getting the bulge on the aft Chinks, the for'ard ones paid a friendly visit to them, but after a few *pourparlers* discovered that the aft Chinks had been to France for three years and had learnt quite a lot concerning "Stock Exchange" matters, and there was distinctly nothing doing between the two parties.

The for'ard Chinks thereupon sent a deputation to the captain to inform him that the "Aft Chinks" were "no dam good-la."

March 28th.—A discussion after tea as to whether a piano or gramophone should be purchased at Port Said, prices being taken into consideration, a gramophone was voted for.

March 29th.—Bright and warm; sent off two marconigrams for tropical kit and money for all ranks. Arrived Port Said, 6 p.m.

March 30th.—Went ashore 7 p.m. last night. "Arab Town" of course out of bounds for all troops.

Undoubtedly a more low down and dangerous spot does not exist on earth than that quarter of Port Said known as Arab Town.

Numberless cases of disappearances without any trace being found of persons who have gone to Arab Town for a spree.

A greater sink of iniquity does not exist—nothing but the lowest vice at the "shows" would flourish in Arab Town.

Arab Town should be sprinkled liberally with "H.E.'s" and a fresh start made.

Got news of the rising at Assiut and Zaginzig—far more serious than the papers make out.

The New Zealanders evidently thoroughly avenged the murder of their officers who were travelling by train, by "wiping the floor" with some four hundred Arabs and "Gypies."

Returned to the ship at 11.30 p.m. Half an hour's row in a small boat propelled by weak-kneed Gypies.

March 31st.—Ship cannot get coal East of Suez, so remained over Sunday for coal and fresh water.

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Bought some kit for the men at the celebrated Simon Artz.

After some difficult manœuvring we steamed down the canal.

On nearing Kantara we saw four miles or so of an enormous military base and store depot. I remember passing this spot many times since 1908, and who would have thought that a small village could have been so quickly transformed into a "military city." What a credit everything is to General Allenby.

The bridge over the canal is a splendid piece of engineering. The Cairo to Jerusalem railway runs over this bridge, which swings open to allow ships to pass. We all marvelled at the neat and efficient structure.

In the place of miles of sandy waste an enormous depot with every conceivable military requirement seems to be stocked at Kantara—cavalry, infantry, etc., etc., with their lines.

The 3/3rd Gurkhas, with the aid of what looked to be white stones, show passing shipping in big letters that they are at present doing their big "bit" on the banks of the Canal.

I wonder when they will see India again after all the battles they've been through.

A panorama view is afforded whilst passing through the canal, and miles of railway workshops and depots have sprung up. Wonderful General Allenby. One officers' mess on the banks of the canal gave us a cheery greeting, and shouted out, "Where are you going to, old sports"? As our destinations include Penang, Singapore, some for Shanghai, and our party are for Russia, we replied, "There and back"—and a sound like Pu-ba, pu-ba came from the megaphone, and we informed the operator that he had won.

April 1st.—We dropped anchor at Suez for water, and moved on again at 8 a.m.

Had the gramophone on deck under an awning, and thoroughly enjoyed listening to the records. Now we've got to settle down for an eighteen days' run without a stop to Penang.

Afraid we shall not put into Colombo, more's the pity.

I did not expect to see Suez so soon again. Last time I was in Suez was in hospital down with a bad attack of Spanish flu'. About the cheeriest thing Spain did in the war was to give the whole world Spanish flu'.

Four of us in a hut—brandy fed by a V.A.D. All honour and glory to the splendid V.A.D.'s. We were fed on chickens. Having been the victim for the past twelve years of the Indian Dak bungalow cook whose standing dish is a "murghi" or fowl, I intensely disliked the upturned drumsticks of the

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wretched fowl which a grinning Gypjie orderly brought to me daily.

The Egyptian cockerel is a pugnacious little bird, and having discovered this excellent "chit" in its favour we coaxed (?) the big Gypjie orderly to produce a couple daily.

On sighting each other, up went their neck feathers, and for quite a time you couldn't see them for dust and little stones. Finally, one bird would throw up the sponge and leg it, with the victor in full pursuit.

The victor would then in its turn be pursued by the orderly and served up next day for our meal. We made a point of eating the victor as we took it that he was in the better condition of the two.

The matron one morning burst upon the interesting scene of four invalids in dressing-gowns and helmets sitting in deck chairs watching two battling cockerels. A pretty picture, forsooth! The orderly took to his heels, and in spite of our entreaties the matron stopped the fight and tabooed the proceeding from ever occurring again. We were very sad—no more cock fights. I was the saddest of all, as I was half-a-crown down on the last fight, and no hope of making good my bitter loss.

Oh, those Gypjie orderlies—what ruffians they are. They spent the day quarrelling, and we were powerless to fetch them a clip, and had to content ourselves with a pot-shot at their heads with a book or other such articles, and loud were the congratulations of the marksman when a bull's-eye was scored and a fez went flying.

The assistant surgeon was 6 ft. 4 in. in height, and had most playful ways.

When we first lobbed up in the hut we were so weak that we had to be carried to bed. On one occasion I was awakened by an instrument being jabbed into my ear, and after nearly pulling my ear off, I realised that the lad was obtaining a very satisfactory blood slide. I was the first on the list, and somewhat enjoyed the spectacle of the other three patients taking it in the ear, so to speak.

The next piece of light-heartedness on the part of the assistant surgeon took the form of a request to open your mouth.

Remembering similar requests, coupled with the injunction to close my eyes, made to me during my childhood days, and being led astray by the assistant's tender smile, I did so, and closed my eyes. Instead of the usual and expected toothsome morsel, the assistant popped a long wire with some cotton wool on it down my throat.

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How he missed my heart is a marvel to me. He eventually withdrew his weapon much after the way in which a sword-swallower withdraws his sword, and examined the wool. The result appeared to cause him intense satisfaction, as again that disarming and inane grin made its appearance.

The man had got a porthole in the face for a mouth.

My ruffled plumes smoothed down at the thought of watching the other three being toyed with.

After my experience they were very gun-shy of the weapon and instructed "George" (I don't think his real name was George, but the V.A.D. said it was something like "Dost Mahomed Abdulla Kartarsin Khan"—I don't think she could have been right—anyway we called the man George) to exercise great care in stuffing the cotton wool down people's throats.

And the result? Try and tickle your Adam's apple with a goose's wing feather and the result is experienced.

The noises made by my companions were terrific; a camel wasn't in it.

As we were not anxious to be left behind at Tufik when the troops moved on, I told the doctor that I felt as strong as a horse, so did one other bhoy. In the words of the poet, "He didn't believe me," but promised to let us go in forty-eight hours. After being discharged from hospital we went under canvas, and beds being scarce, slept on stretchers balanced on two soap boxes—and very nice, too.

Oh, Suez and Tufik! How we all hated the places—nothing to do—nothing to see.

Finally we got orders to embark on cattle trucks; this we did at nine o'clock at night.

Fifteen officers to a truck. After much horseplay with our kit we managed to get more or less into a lying position, like sardines in a tin.

Sleep? *Not much.* That old goods train had some shunting to do, and the couplings between the trucks were at their full length.

We heard the engine start, and down the line would come clink, clank, clank, clank, until the jerk caught our truck and we clanked.

Then the engine would stop suddenly, and punt, punt, punt, punt, would come down the line of trucks till our turn came to stop with a jerk and we punted.

This is what happened each time the train started and stopped, and many were the times it did this.

At five the next morning we started on our journey to Port Said.

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When the sun rose we doffed our tunics and sat in shirt sleeves, "shorts," and helmets and sweated away.

That old bus of a train stopped like a tired cab horse on the slightest pretext.

Food on the train, none ; drinks, only from the water bottle of the thoughtful ones.

Men (natives of the coolie and R.A.M.C.) got left behind.

Silly fools ! They got off the train unknown to anyone, and when the train started made no attempt to run after it until it had a start on them of four miles—and then, if they had only jogged-trotted they would have caught up easily enough.

After a most enjoyable—m'yes—journey lasting seventeen hours we arrived at Port Said—hungry ? *pas demi*, meaning not 'arf.

Four solid hours afterwards we got a meal. Good going on a few cream horns we got at the railway station at Ismailia. We did get out of Port Said eventually and embarked for Taranto.

We delayed sailing as three ships had just been torpedoed ahead of us ; two crawled back and the third touched bottom. Shortly afterwards we decided to make a dash for it, and escorted by three Jap destroyers, one French, and a mystery ship we left Port Said.

The success of the submarine campaign was obvious by the tell-tale masts and funnels sticking up out of the water.

We zigzagged the whole way across, living in life-belts and manning the boats in the particularly dangerous areas. It was a nuisance feeding with life-belts on and lugging life-belts about all day, but, of course, very necessary.

It was excellent getting into a bed again, as at Port Said I had to sleep on the sand, and in spite of a hole dug to accommodate my thighbones the ground was hard, the sand had a way of its own of packing itself into lumps, and I used to spend the first few nights in threading my nymph-like form in between the lumps.

We duly lobbed up at Taranto, Italy, and there we went into huts. The "beds" consisted of three wooden planks which were placed across two trestles about a foot off the ground.

Having stood the trestles up, I carefully placed the three planks on them, and put my overcoat down first on the planks to act as a mattress.

There were about forty beds in the hut, all in lines. We had the time of our lives looking for our kit, which arrived off the ship on lighters, and was placed on small quarry trucks and pushed up to the camp and bundled out.

As the kit of two ship loads was bundled out together, the

THE VOYAGE FROM GLASGOW

joy in searching in mounds of kit in the dark or by the aid of an electric torch for one's own particular trunk, valise or bedding, can better be imagined than described. After hours of it we found our kit and were very thankful to turn in.

The man next to me snored terrifically. I tried to put up with it, but he gave a quick succession of grunts and snorts in taking the inward breath and a shrill whistle when exhaling.

I took up my bed and walked to spare planks at the end of the hut. Having balanced the planks on the trestles, I got on very carefully and got to sleep. In turning over, however, the bed collapsed. It did this with such painful frequency that I gave it up and slept on the floor.

Throughout the night the sound of collapsing beds on the cemented floor at regular intervals succeeded in giving the majority of us a rotten night's sleep.

The morning was most welcome—and we got up at 6.30 for a wash. The nearest place was half a mile away, so with paraphernalia necessary for shaving and washing we trudged off.

The water was as cold as it could be short of freezing. However no grumbling; we did not expect anything else, so were not disappointed. We next put our kit in order and formed in a queue at the mess for food tickets.

The time spent in the "rest camp" was indeed a "rest" which we could have cheerfully done without. It was deadly, but only lasted three days. At last our turn came to entrain, which we did at 7 a.m.

Three officers to a first-class coupé, and very comfortable it looked after cattle trucks.

We settled our kit in and about twelve o'clock the train pushed off.

It was an uphill climb for a long way, and we crawled along with frequent stops for no apparent purpose for the next thirty-six hours.

The only camp out of the ordinary was the one at Fianzo. I had heard this was referred to as the model camp and richly did it deserve the distinguishing title.

The Colonel-in-charge spared no pains from the time he met the train, and gave us detailed instructions as to what we were to do, to the time we said good-bye, which was on the same day.

The camp was beautifully laid out. Hot shower baths, reading rooms, and mess and cloakrooms all separate.

An excellent dinner was served up, and a splendid Italian orchestra played up-to-date selections. It was a treat and we gratefully subscribed the bob ahead for the excellent performance. There were also shops in the camp grounds, and some very

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fine Venetian art work could be bought, as also could other things.

The army canteen store was also a thing for wonderment. Everything could be had, and the whole arrangements in connection with the stores and the men's comforts were a masterpiece of methodical management. Heartly congratulations to the Colonel ! May his name live for ever !

We regretfully left Fianzo and pushed on towards the Alps. Cold ? Oh help ! After the grilling in Egypt we, I think, realised what cold was. At night two officers slept on the bunks. I, for choice, slept on the floor. The others realised the reason for my choice, as they were miserably cold during the night, and I, as warm as toast, their blankets having dropped from the bunks on to me during the night.

Sitting still in carriages which are not heated when crossing the Alps in October is an experience I am not keen on repeating.

We were very glad to come to a halt the other side of the Alps and detrain for some tea. We came across the Austrian prisoners taken just before Austria threw up the sponge following the big Italian push.

The prisoners looked very much the worse for wear, unshaven and sallow, and in rags. They were ravenously devouring bread and jam, and drinking steaming mugs of hot tea. Although they were alongside us, there was not the slightest attempt made by our men to fraternise, though the prisoners certainly tried to make friends with smiles and looks.

There was still a war on and we didn't forget it. We entrained after a good wash in buckets of water with ice floating in them.

When we arrived in France there was great excitement as everyone expected Armistice to be signed. Jove, I have side-stepped from off the track of the route from Glasgow to Moscow, but in passing familiar scenes I could not help recording the memories of very recent events.

April 3rd.—Out of the Gulf of Suez. At ten o'clock p.m. we passed the Island of Perim. The lighthouses flashed their warnings, and we signalled to them.

We are not going to touch in at Colombo, but are going direct to Penang—another fourteen days without a stop.

Perim looked very desolate indeed, and I fully sympathise with the brilliant subaltern in command of the company at Perim who conducted the affairs in connection with Perim, through the medium of his sergeant-major, from his club in town, for two years.

Passing Mount Sinai ; captains of ships differ in their opinion of the exact spot at which the maltreated Israelites crossed the

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Red Sea when the waves obligingly parted to let them through, though they appear to agree that the view has not altered much in latter years.

April 4th.—Passed Aden at a distance—another desolate spot I have visited often ; but Aden is a town of joy and light-heartedness as compared with Perim.

April 5th.—We push along very nicely and shall be out of the Gulf of Aden to-morrow.

Passed the Island of Abukail with its solitary lighthouse. I suppose it is possible for human beings to be marooned on a rock and live without taking complete leave of their senses, but I'd rather go fishing than try it.

We burst out into a concert last night ; my word ! it was quite a bracing event after the dreary occupations of the past three odd weeks.

The whole affair was crowned with success, and a topical verse by the ship's poet included the distressing episode of my nearly losing the boat at Havre.

April 8th.—We have been passing along the coast of British Somaliland since leaving Assyniboyia, and will soon be out of sight of Gadafine, and then will see no more land save the Island of Sacoutra until we arrive near the Malay Straits.

A wireless message asked whether there would be any accommodation for ladies from Singapore to Hong-Kong.

This ship is not fitted to carry mixed passengers, and it is most unsuitable for ladies. Much as we all adore the fair sex I hope for their own comfort they will choose some other ship, but I think it is a case of Hobson's Choice these days.

I hear from the skipper that we shall stay at Singapore for a week. What with our frequent stops after leaving Penang it looks as if our little party will not reach Russia much before the end of May.

April 13th.—We passed the Point de Galle and coast of Ceylon early this morning.

Many catamarans sailing about.

Very weird craft with the narrow main boat balanced with two bamboos jutting out connecting the main craft with a floating plank.

Very hot indeed, with a following wind, and difficult to get to sleep.

Cabins too hot to sleep in, so we sleep on deck. Worst of sleeping on deck, one has to get up so early to allow of the hose getting to work on the decks. Officers with eyes like poached eggs come dismally down into the saloon to try and snatch some more sleep ; failing that they stand about awaiting their turn for a

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bath, eyeing each other with one fixed eye with the other eye slowly rotating.

Getting on with my Russian ; can ask for a drink with great éclat in Russian and also engage an imaginary room at a hotel, having fixed the inclusive cost with an imaginary grasping manager.

The Russian N.C.O. understudies the manager's part and also that of a shopkeeper when I assume the rôle of an intending purchaser.

It is a little distressing, however, when I ask for some tobacco, to find that I have really asked for some mild soap.

Three days more before we arrive at Penang. The gramophone is distinctly out of favour ; everyone hates one tune or other, and as there is not a single record that does not grate on the nerves of at least one person the instrument is left out of conversation.

April 15th.—It's not my birthday to-day, but I won the "sweep." I drew "Lowfield" and offered my chance to anyone for threepence.

The representative of the Royal Navy said he was glad he had at last found someone to take his place as holder of "low place."

When I was informed that the vast sum of 22s. was mine for the taking I replied that it was too hot for leg pulls, but felt convinced that it was no ribald jest when the coin was handed to me. Drinks all round only cost 17s. 6d.

The Southern Cross looks very bright to-night. In lat. 16 saw the Southern Cross and North Star simultaneously. Moon at the full and sea like a mill pond. One passenger must, I think, be in love, as on moonlight nights he leans over the ship's sides, and walks aimlessly about the deck with his protruding eyes turned heavenwards looking for all the world like a gloomy prawn.

April 16th.—Passed the Island of Sumatra this afternoon. Oh, the pity of it, that we should have bartered this rich land, rolling in all the riches derived from every kind of mineral, oil and other paying products, for Malacca.

The unfortunate Aschenenese who inhabited the Island vowed that they would never accept the Dutch as their rulers, and said they would fight them until the British returned.

The war against Dutch Rule has been going on for the past forty-five years, and is still going strong. By all accounts the Dutch will never get the Aschenenese under control, and the cannibals faithful to Britain will vainly fight on with the hope that the lord and masters whom they are willing to acknowledge as such, will one day return to take up the reins of office.

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One of the richest lands in the world—no development—since European occupation, and no likelihood of the world benefiting from the unlimited coal, ore and all kinds of minerals, not to mention first-rate big game shooting at one's own risk at the hands of head hunters. This is the last night, as some of the passengers disembark at Penang, which we reach to-morrow. Oh hell!—and I am not using strong language—I paid a visit to the engine-room; Dante's *Inferno* no more, no less.

The Chinese firemen with towels over their heads stood raking out the fires.

Such an atmosphere of ashes; and into this unlovely scene I blundered and had to stay there until the enthusiastic engineer had fully explained every detail of the stoke-hole.

I came away out of the stoke-hole with a small Niagara running down my face. My shirt was soaked through with perspiration and I then accompanied the engineer among the hot throbbing engines, grasping numerous rails with bunches of cotton waste which I held in my hands. I eventually got up to the surface on deck and thought that a frost had set in.

One does not realise how cool the tropics are in April until one returns from a grilling in an engine-room.

I don't know what possessed me to go down in the engine-room, as I had seen so many other ships' engine-rooms.

April 17th.—Sighted the Island of Penang about 3 p.m., but did not get into port until after 8.30.

Very pretty view nearing Penang, and numerous bamboo sticks could be seen protruding out of the water with nets attached to them.

The nets were full of fish, which could be seen jumping out of the water in their endeavours to escape out of the net.

Many Chinese junks passing the ship, all on fishing bent.

Went ashore in a launch and rickshawed up to the E. & O. Hotel.

The rickshaw is a very light one as compared to the Indian "rick." The former is hauled by one man, whereas the latter has any number, pulling and pushing, from three to six.

The people at the hotel were, I think, expecting us, and dancing was in progress.

We kept things up until late and then the orchestra cleared off.

Was invited to lunch by a lady and her husband for the following day.

Remained on shore with the others.

Met an old school friend whom I had not seen for some twelve years, necessitating a celebration ceremony though the time was 3.30 a.m.

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April 18th.—Got hold of a good car, and did the famous “round the island trip”—forty-two miles. I don’t think I have ever seen anything so pretty as this trip.

The roads are in splendid condition, and the hills are very pretty indeed. Combined with the sea and miles and miles of cocoanut and betel-nut plantation, the scenery is indeed lovely.

The road runs through numerous plantations, and in many parts is straight for a considerable distance with tall cocoanut palms lining each side of the road.

In the groves are Malay huts built on piles, with the half-naked Malay working in the plantations tapping the rubber trees.

For quite a distance the road runs along the beach, and again the picture presented is ideal with palms, white road, blue sea with Chinese junks sailing about, and in the blue sea emerald islands dotted about.

Very numerous betel-nut and rubber trees abound on both sides of the road, but the rubber plantations on the island are very inferior to the plantations around Kvala Lumpa, Clang, Bunting, etc. Large quantities of block tin stacked on the wharf, testifying to the richness of the Malay States, which produce something like two-thirds of the entire output of tin in the world.

Very numerous Indians from different Provinces in India are much in evidence, having settled down in the Malay States.

Quantities of these people come over to the States, as they are able to make money in the States much more quickly than they can in India. A Sikh merchant explained to me that whereas he got a few rupees on a deal in India, he got the same number of dollars in the States for a similar deal.

When a rupee is worth 1s. 4d. and a Malay dollar is worth 2s. 4d. it is easy to understand that money is going to be made when a man draws in the States ten dollars where he would only draw ten rupees in India.

A very large Chinese population.

Most of the plantations in Penang are owned by the Chinese, who live in luxurious houses and drive about in large motor cars.

I was generally struck with the cleanliness of Penang and the methodical and neat way everything was laid out.

The golf-course and race-course are in keeping with the rest of the place, and the club is a spot to foregather at of an evening without fail.

We embarked at eleven o’clock p.m. and all slept up on deck. Rain descended as soon as we fell asleep, resulting in a wild

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scramble for cover, dragging the bedding with us. We sorted out our belongings next morning.

April 19th.—We steamed off at daybreak this morning, and are now entering the Straits.

A thunderstorm with vivid flashes of lightning and heavy rain which envelops the ship to such an extent that we are compelled to go dead slow.

The lightship was reported missing by wireless this morning. If we don't see any light indicating the shoals we are going to drop anchor—which means we won't get to Port Swettenham until about 10 or 11 a.m. instead of 7.30 or 8.

Have decided not to go by train to Singapore as the places of interest can be visited from the ports we touch at. I hope to go to Clang to-morrow.

I think one or two of the passengers had a thick night last night, as I understand their heads could be bought for a song this morning. Seeing the state of their plight I thought the time ripe to put a riddle, or rather a problem, to those who cared to ascertain by concentration whether their brains were paralysed or not.

"Does a bicycle go forward because the wheels go round, or do the wheels go round because the bicycle goes forward?" I cheerfully asked. There was gloomy silence—this I expected; but presently one said, "It goes forward because the wheels go round." At once he was contradicted, as the second lad held the view that the wheels go round because the machine goes forward. More babble, everyone talking at once. Usually I withdraw at this stage, and I did so on this occasion. The arguments waxed hot and furious and the gathering split up into groups. An hour and a half later I looked in again. Several had relapsed into gloomy silence. One had been totally overcome and was asleep, and three were still at it, and I am afraid had reached the rude stage as they were calling each other "cheerful idiot" and "my dear poor imbecile," etc., etc.

April 20th.—Arrived at Port Swettenham at about eight o'clock. Went ashore in a sampan and straightway got into a rickshaw and made for Clang.

The road was in excellent condition, and was bordered on each side by cocoanut and rubber tree plantations.

Swettenham is almost sea level, and the tide makes itself felt as far as Clang, some five miles from Swettenham.

Port Swettenham is a swamp pure and simple, and is the mosquito's paradise—no shops, only a store or two, and a small post office and railway station. Only one European bungalow,

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that of the local doctor—when passing there was no mistaking the fact that a European occupied the house—the garden alone being the one fair spot amidst filthy swamp and muddy vegetation.

On arrival at Clang a bee-line was made for the “Hotel-resthouse-dak-bungalow”—situated on a hill. The rickshaws stop at the bottom of a flight of steps. There was nothing to show where the steps led to, but on arriving at the top the forementioned effort displayed itself.

We went into the verandah parboiled and sweating copiously, and ordered up gin slings and “stingers.” These were dealt with satisfactorily. The first round washed the dust down, and the second round we tasted, and subsequent rounds assisted in taking the place of the moisture our shirts had mopped up off our long-suffering bodies.

Some of the local “colour” and gentry blew in and cheerily wished us “Good-morning and how you are?” We felt better, and said so, and adjourned to look at the sights of Clang.

This did not occupy much time. The local Sikh policeman directed us, quite unnecessarily, to the big main thoroughfare; Clang only boasts of one street and an ancient Portuguese Fort with its old guns still in existence.

We tried to purchase cigars at a “European Store.” Before buying unknown brands we asked to look at them.

One or two boxes were opened—but no business was transacted.

The wily Malay was not to be coaxed into opening any more boxes—and perhaps rightly. A box attracted our attention, and the price being \$7.50, we thought that we could not go far wrong in buying it.

One hundred cigars for \$7.50—we halved the price (old “Two-and-threepence” being the other goat), and we opened the box.

“Two-and-threepence” and I took one look at the “cigars” (?) and then mutually apologised for being a partner to such a bad bargain.

We, however, lit up one cigar each and went back to the hotel, and on passing the police constable he stood to attention and inflated his chest. He just caught our joint puffs.

The man must know what “hookah” smoke in the lungs feels like—yet, poor devil, he coughed “sumfink horrid” for quite a while after we had passed.

We mounted the steps at the hotel and joined the “sling and stinger” circle, but had to throw away the cigars owing to the discontent and bad feeling they stirred up. How we could

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smoke them halfway through is beyond all understanding—but I think “Two-and-threepence” and self are entitled to flatter ourselves on the strength exhibited by our respective “little Marys.”

We soon afterwards boarded the rickshaws and sweated our way back to Port Swettenham.

The boat left Swettenham at four in the afternoon, and after winding about the river got out to the open sea. The mosquitos were sold a pup. They must have been eyeing the boat with their mouths watering all day, from their day retreat in the leafy jungle waiting for sundown, to come aboard for some real fresh English blood, after daily fare off tough and unsucculent Malays.

April 21st.—Arrived at Singapore at about 10.30 a.m., and after the police and Embarkation Officer came aboard we went ashore.

The first hotel we went to was Raffles, and a very fine hotel it is too. Every room was booked up, but we were offered sleeping accommodation at a nursing home. Some accepted the offer—I was one of those who didn't.

After lunch we went shopping, and a general tour round in rickshaws.

Some of the shops were good, and the majority of requisite articles could be purchased at unreasonable figures.

I, with a party, visited the Fort and reported our arrival, drew money, and were much impressed by the nice way the Paymaster-Colonel treated us.

In the evening we dined at Raffles, where an orchestra played selections.

A large number of Europeans at dinner, the fair sex being well represented.

A theatrical company were putting up there, so we viewed their performance in the evening. Quite good it was, too—the theatre is a very fine one with a large balcony where all adjourn at half-time for light refreshment. After the performance we went to the Europe Hotel, which is alongside the theatre, and in company with representatives of the senior service enjoyed a few rounds of throat varnish.

The Europe Hotel is a very fine one, and apparently there's nothing much to choose between the two leading hotels.

There are other hotels, but they are Japanese—one or two of the ship's passengers went to these hotels, and a miserable tale of woe was unfolded next day.

The following day was spent in identically the same way as the first.

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I returned to the ship every night and slept on deck—but two nights out of three it poured with rain. We could not get any cover save tarpaulin. We hung on until the rain soaked through one blanket and sheet after the other, and then left the beds where they were and sat in the saloon. I went on the island where the Ordnance is established, and got the men some tropical gear. About time too, since they had been up to their arrival at Singapore in the thick uniform they wore in France.

April 25th.—In the afternoon, at 4 p.m., we moved out from docks and steamed off to an oil depot situated on an island.

April 26th.—After taking on oil all night we cast off, and are now on our way to Hong-Kong.

We are at the present moment passing through a live minefield.

This minefield was not discovered until quite recently. Four Japanese steamers struck mines and were sunk, and mine-sweepers are busy trying to make the course safe.

The German raider *Wolff* is responsible for laying down a hundred odd mines, and some forty-one up to now have been accounted for—cheerio—this ship has passed through this minefield four times sublimely unconscious of danger, and here's to the fifth trip.

April 27th.—Oh, such a good laugh this morning! One of the passengers, a Captain C., of the Merchant Service, heard that at Singapore among the passengers embarking was a Spaniard. Captain C., having been to the Argentine in the course of his many voyages, was delighted at the news, and at once instructed the Chief Steward to put the toreador in his cabin as there was a berth vacant. C.'s orders were faithfully carried out, and Spargoni (looking more as if he flicked flies with elastic than fought bulls) was duly conducted to Captain C.'s cabin.

When C. came aboard he hurriedly dashed to his cabin to greet the Spaniard, and on meeting him, at once broke out into (so Spanish-speaking passengers on board tell me) some jargon with a flavouring of Spanish.

Spargoni looked at C. in a scared way and shook his head—after a further burst of jovial greeting in Spanish on the part of C., poor Spargoni nearly dropped with fright.

C. has a most ferocious appearance when engaged in very ordinary conversation, but when excited looks most aggressive. He is quite a character at chess, and woe betide the opponent who takes his bishop or castle; as for the man who takes his Queen—I shudder at the thought of doing it.

However, to continue about Spargoni and our famous chess player.

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Captain C. withdrew from the cabin under the impression that Spargoni was mad, "mad as a hatter, poor fellow," as C. said, but we all understood the situation as Spargoni was a Portuguese and knew nary one single blinking word of Spanish.

C.'s disgust on discovering the fact was positively pathetic, and he promptly took his bed out on deck for the night as the stable companion of his own choice elected to sleep in the cabin.

Next morning I left my cabin hurriedly to ascertain the reason for a terrific uproar. C. was cursing and swearing in a manner enough to make a hardened trooper turn green with envy.

A group of lads were round him, trying to find out what was the matter.

C. relapsed into silence and looked stupidly round like a dazed hen, and then shouted, "Come and see my blinking cabin."

We did—and, oh! horrible spectacle!—the whole cabin had been used as a spittoon with the greatest impartiality. Watch a "chokidar" or a punkah coolie let fly after five minutes preparation and neck work and—enough! Not only were the walls of the cabin decorated, but also C.'s nice shiny boots and spotless tennis shoes, which were the joy of C.'s heart and the pride of the ship when he was on deck. We silently and sympathetically withdrew out of earshot of C., and then held each other up whilst the tears ran down our cheeks. Our ribs are almost rid of all pain now—but they did hurt for a long while. C. and Spargoni, as we call him, are not on speaking terms for two reasons—one being that they know no mutual language, and the second, it would make no difference if they did.

April 30th.—Sighted land at 8.30. Nearing Hong-Kong. Beautiful sight, the entrance to Hong-Kong. Mountains as a background, and numerous islands with lighthouses in the foreground. A narrow entrance between two hills, one hill sporting the first lighthouse ever built. Directly after passing this narrow entrance on the left we saw Clear Water Bay, so called because although the depth is some 40 ft. or more, the bottom can be seen quite distinctly.

Shortly after passing the Bay we swung round to the left and picked up the pilot.

We noticed in the harbour the sister ship of the big Japanese passenger steamer which ran ashore in a fog, the wreck of which we passed this morning.

The ship was captained by a British skipper, with a Japanese as mate. The skipper having instructed his officers to wake him should there be any indication of fog, turned in.

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He awoke when the ship ran smack into a cleft between towering hills, and on coming out of his cabin saw a fog as thick as a hedge surrounding the ship.

The skipper was summarily dismissed, and the mate promoted.

On arrival in harbour we went ashore in time to engage rooms at the King Edward Hotel. We tried to get rooms in the Hong-Kong Hotel, which is a lively and good hotel having its own orchestra, but were unable to do so.

Failing to get rooms at the Hong-Kong, I preferred to feed ashore and sleep on the ship.

May 1st.—Next day I took the mountain railway trip up to the Peak, and lunched at the Peak Hotel.

It was hot and sticky in Hong-Kong, but beautifully fresh up on the Peak.

The mountain railway consists of two cars, which are hauled to the top by cables, and the journey takes about twenty minutes. It is most interesting, and a splendid piece of engineering is exhibited in the trip up the Peak. The roads round the Peak are splendid, and are made from some stuff like asphalt, and the view from the different parts of the Peak when viewed from the rickshaw circular trip is very lovely indeed.

The harbour below, all the ships, and some thirty islands, on a clear day are really worth seeing.

The night effect, with the town lit up for miles and every little ship showing a light, is like fairyland.

The Peak, at certain seasons of the year, is very prone to fog—which penetrates everywhere, and affects articles in the houses to the extent of creating mildew, and is altogether a great nuisance to householders.

Hong-Kong has many beautiful buildings, and is altogether a very pretty and interesting spot, and a spot in which one can spend a very interesting visit up to any length of time without getting bored.

I did a bathe at the Royal Yacht Club, but the water might have been cleaner. The Hong-Kong Club is a separate institution to the R.Y.C., and is very conveniently situated.

It's a residential club, and is an exceedingly nice one.

One of the officers I met knew pals of mine, and as he had lived in Hong-Kong for some years, volunteered to show me some very interesting sights.

Chinatown is alongside the Hong-Kong Hotel, within five minutes' walk.

From the European style of things one is suddenly confronted with the Far East. The Chinese shops appear to compete as to which can hang the prettiest and longest signboards out.

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To see the boards painted in every imaginable colour, with gold, silver or black lettering in Chinese characters, is a sight to be remembered.

On each street these signs, which are oblong, hang down facing up and down the street, and the whole effect is very pretty indeed, especially when viewed with the sun striking up or down the street.

The shops vary : from large and flourishing stores one turns down a side street to discover small shops which sell all kinds of Chinese things, opium pipes and the numerous accompaniments to opium pipes, brassware, etc., etc. ; while others have spread on the ground what looks to be like a jumble sale, articles such as rusty nails, soda-water bottles, marbles, trouser buttons, scrap iron, and a hundred and one other such things.

One could spend days going round the streets, and every moment would produce something interesting. The shopkeepers always greet one with a cheery smile, and never attempt to thrust their wares on one.

The china exhibited for sale is very lovely, and I very much wanted to purchase some, only it is out of the question to cart such articles about when going on active service.

If one has time, the trip to Canton is not to be missed. The steamer and train service is very conveniently arranged. One can sleep on board the steamer, and make the trip both ways by steamer, or do the journey by train. The journey is quite a short one by train, taking some five hours. The steamers leave at 8 a.m. and 10 p.m., and one can leave one's kit on the steamer when going round Canton.

The scenery is worth seeing by steamer, and Canton most assuredly is. The Chinese employ tame cormorants to catch fish for them.

The birds wear an iron ring round the neck to prevent them from swallowing the fish which they so skilfully catch.

May 3rd.—My friends and I dined at the Hong-Kong Hotel, and after dinner went to the theatre, which is quite a good one.

The pictures were not good, so we left. "T." volunteered to introduce me to a Chinese club, and conditions pertaining thereto not often experienced by Europeans.

We got into two rickshaws and sped through Chinatown to a place where all the large Chinese hotels and theatres are situated.

T. stopped the ricks outside a building, and we got out and walked up a flight of steps into a nice cheerful-looking room.

There were several Chinese gentlemen present, and T. introduced me to them.

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They all spoke excellent English, two of them having spent some years in England. I was shown how Chinese characters are formed with the aid of a fine paintbrush—a pen being useless when forming Chinese characters.

After one or two attempts I managed to copy my own name.

Slippers were provided, and we were asked to take our coats off and make ourselves thoroughly comfortable.

Cigarettes were exchanged and some of the gentlemen present commenced to play "matschew," a game played with pieces after the style of dominoes, and conducted on rather the same lines as poker with cards.

One or two of the others got into comfortable attitudes on the wooden settees constructed in such a way as to form a horse-shoe, with the opium pipes and opium, and a lamp burning in the middle of the shoe. I got on one of the settees with a china inlaid slab for a pillow, and carefully watched one of the Chinese gentlemen prepare his opium pill.

Taking an instrument like a scapula, he took about one-eighth of a teaspoonful of treacle opium out of the small pill-box as sold by Government with the Government stamp on the box.

He next took a thin steel probe, and by twisting the probe round managed to wrap the treacle round it.

He then held it over the glass lamp, and the treacle immediately bubbled. He continued twisting the probe with the opium on it over the lamp for two or three minutes, and then worked the treacle about on the smooth surface of the opium pipe bowl.

In about a minute a pill was formed, a little smaller than a Carter's Little Liver Pill for Pink or Pale People, or whatever colour they ought not to be.

An opium pipe consists of a long round piece of bamboo very much after the style of a clarinet. Almost at one end of the pipe is a hollow into which fits the bowl of the pipe. The bowl is a solid teacup-shaped piece of metal or china with a very small hole bored through the centre.

On the top of the hole the opium pill is placed, and is then held over the lamp, while the smoker leans back and rests his head on the pillow. In three or four puffs the pill is finished.

I have read and have been told a lot of arrant rot about the effects of opium smoking. Having seen the effects with my own eyes many times, and having got first-hand information from the Chinese gentlemen, and also my friend who occasionally indulges in a pipe, I am very much wiser now.

I say now and finally that opium smoking is injurious whether indulged in excess or not, but the popular idea of opium smokers

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dozing off into a sublime sleep and dreaming wonderful dreams is very much exaggerated.

After one or two or even three pills have been smoked, I have carefully watched the result, and the smoker has been and behaved exactly the same as if he had smoked three Capstan cigarettes.

The effect of an opium smoke depends exactly on the number of pills smoked, and how often a person indulges in the habit.

If one is feeling tired, an opium smoke has the same refreshing feeling that a hot bath with a tablespoonful of ammonia in it has.

I have tried the latter but not the former, but persons who have tried both tell me what I have stated above.

Two pills have the effect of keeping one awake just in the same manner that strong coffee at night will. Three pills have this effect, but more so.

When opium smokers get more pills to their pipe than is required to produce the effect of wakefulness and freshness, then the dreams do set in with a vengeance. Drink too much and the brain is affected—you see double. Do anything in excess and nature is outraged, and is quick to resent it.

Any stimulant taken as a regular thing, and resulting in an unnatural state being produced, is bound to have a harmful effect on the constitution. I refused to try and smoke even one pill, though pressed to do so, as I am convinced that the effect at the commencement is very pleasing and soothing, and this being the case, the natural impulse is to repeat the performance.

I am very fond of smoking in moderation, but am content with tobacco in any shape or form.

Opium smoking, as the Chinese gentlemen admitted, had a very injurious effect when taken with a view of obtaining a certain state of coma, and this state is much favoured by a certain class of native of India, especially Pathans. Excessive indulgence of alcohol will produce this state, but the brain is likewise affected, whereas in the case of opium it leaves the brain more or less active while paralysing certain sensitive nerves of the body.

No two opinions expressed to me on opium smoking have ever concurred up to the time I visited Hong-Kong. Opinions expressed at the Chinese club by intelligent and educated opium smokers all concurred with each other, and from my personal observations I am quite content to believe that what I have written is correct.

I was presented with one of the pipes, glass lamp complete with its big tumbler chimney, scapula steel probe, a celluloid

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opium box, etc., as a souvenir, and have added it to my collection of interesting "curios."

Supper was announced. This was indeed a weird affair. On top of the square games table, a round table-top was placed with a cloth on it.

Numerous dishes shaped like fruit dishes were brought on, containing beans, chutney in every shape of form, sliced potatoes, chopped meat of all kinds, also frogs' legs. In the centre of these numerous dishes was placed a large dish containing "chop sui," and soup of a thin variety.

Each guest had a small bowl of rice and another small dish of thick soup placed before him.

Chopsticks were placed alongside. I soon got into the use of chopsticks, and having picked out some meat and a couple of frogs' legs from the centre bowl, I got busy.

I pretended to eat a little meat, and nibbled a frog's leg. The leg did not compare with the legs I had devoured with relish in Canada, so I gave it a miss in baulk. The rice was difficult to eat with the sticks, so I followed the general example set and, seizing the bowl in my left hand, shovelled a little rice into my mouth, but was unable to use my mouth like a vacuum cleaner and suck in the rice as the practised hands did.

Having devoured a teaspoonful all told, I declared myself thoroughly satisfied with the excellent fare provided.

Wet towels were handed round by the waiters, one to each guest. I used my hands on them, preferring my handkerchief for my mouth ablutions.

Directly supper was over, the majority of the supper party settled down to matschew, and a Chinese orchestra consisting of one-stringed violins serenaded us. We went out on the balcony to view the orchestra, and the music was very pleasing; the time was *Al* to dance a one-step to.

Chinese music is really musical, quite different from the "nautch" music which accompanies a yelling nautchgirl in her endeavours to sing a love song.

After listening to the orchestra for some time, we said good night to the members of the club who had done us so well, and took ourselves off to my friend's quarters.

As it was about 12.30, and the last ferry to the ship had left, T. said the journey in a sampam was poor fun at that time of night, and said he could rig me out at his place.

A stretcher bed was put together, and with my clothes for a pillow, I said I could be quite comfortable providing some night attire was forthcoming.

A Chinese suit was provided from T.'s wardrobe, and *voila*,

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all was serene. Before turning in, T. produced a bottle of vodka with which some Russian naval officers passing through had presented him. I had never tasted vodka before, and as I was bound for the land of vodka I was anxious to do so. Wine glasses were produced and half filled up.

I took a wee sip, and at first thought T. had made a mistake, and had poured out some methylated spirits with a dash of petrol in it.

However, the next sip tasted better, and the third more like a neat spirit of quality, but I don't think I shall ever enthuse over vodka. The bed had no mattress, blankets, or anything else, but I soon fell asleep, to awaken shortly after to beat off an attack from a ferocious mosquito.

Finding, evidently, that I made a good supper, the mosquito blew the gaff to his pals, and they came along in force, in spite of the fact that the night was on the cold side and a breeze was blowing through the room.

Seeing a mat on the floor I hauled it over me and took cover. I felt warmer also, as I was feeling chilly, and was soon asleep and remained so until the mat slipped off me.

I was glad when morning came. I hurriedly flung on my things, and after arranging to meet T. later on in the day, I made for the ferry, and soon arrived on board ship, where I was glad to soak in a hot bath and change for breakfast.

I went ashore after breakfast, and went to the photographer's to buy some views of Hong-Kong.

He showed me a sample book of photographs for sale, and I selected some nice views. There were photographs in the book of Chinese executions, taken during the Revolution. Heads of victims strewn about the ground or stuck on to the corpse in different positions. Also photographs of victims sentenced to be cut to pieces.

Tied to stakes, these unfortunate victims, including women who had murdered their children, were "snapped" at different stages of being cut to pieces.

Horrible, revolting, does not express the sickening sight. I have seen some terrible sights at one time or another, but have no wish to possess records in the shape of photographs of them, and I emphatically refused to purchase any at "ridiculously low prices."

May 4th.—We sailed promptly at 4 o'clock, and are now on our way to Tsing Tau, where we disembark the Chinese Labour Corps, and then return to Shanghai, where we disembark ourselves and wait for a boat to Russia. But more about this when it all happens.

CHAPTER II

FROM CHINA TO SIBERIA

May 5th.—Passing through the Channel of Formosa. Very many Chinese junks sailing about. Every “jack” man on these junks is a natural pirate, and woe betide the unfortunate ship in distress.

Piracy in these parts is rampant, and the journey to Canton is done under escort usually of an armed gunboat.

On one occasion a ship carrying Chinese passengers was “held up” in a really romantic style.

The “passengers” were pirates, and having locked the skipper, who was working in his cabin, safely out of harm’s way, they proceeded to do ditto to the engineers in the engine-room. All was beautifully timed.

Those officers who were not in a position to be locked up were soon given to understand that they had better knuckle under to overwhelming odds.

The *bona-fide* passengers were then lined up, and a collection made.

A rich merchant had twelve hundred dollars in notes, and a gold watch and chain and rings on him.

He stuffed the jewellery down the back of his neck, and stuffed all save 85 dollars into his socks, and with tears in his eyes and blubbing like an infant, he held out his hand with the 85 dollars.

The pirates eagerly seized this handsome gift, and quickly passed on down the line and over the side of the ship into junks which by pre-arranged plans had come up alongside, and soon afterwards lost themselves in the darkness.

The fat merchant laughed himself silly with delight at escaping with such a slight loss.

May 7th.—Ran into fog which brought the hooter into play. Passed out of the fog within half an hour.

Weather turned very much colder. No more sleeping on deck, as the cabins are cool enough. Khaki drill uniform substituted by thicker stuff. Arrived at Tsing Tau at 8 p.m., and anchored some distance off the harbour opposite the lighthouse.

Tsing Tau looks very pretty at night with all the hundreds

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of lamps twinkling for miles. We have to wait until to-morrow morning before moving round the narrow strip of land which covers the entrance to the harbour.

May 8th.—About eight o'clock a whole bunch of Japanese officers came aboard to examine the Chinese Labour Corps.

We discovered one officer with a sword which he carried in his hand much after the style of the lad of the "Lowther Arcade Gee-gee" fame, strutting round the deck, and at intervals engaged in a vigorous display of dumb-bell exercise whilst his sword reposed on the deck.

The word soon went round, and he seemed very pleased with his audience, and put a lot of ginger into his efforts by way of showing his appreciation of our attention. The next "show" consisted of the Chinese filing past the Japanese doctors, who were all in uniform, with large field boots on, swords which they had to carry in their hands like walking-sticks for want of slings; also revolvers strapped on.

We were duly impressed, so much so, that periodically we had to retire to get it over and return with straight faces.

Of course the medicos, etc., did not represent the dress and style of the Army, but they were entirely successful in their endeavours to appear magnificently military.

At 9.45 we tied up at the wharf and went ashore in rickshaws.

Tsing Tau had been a bright jewel in the crown of the German Empire. The Kaiser was personally interested in the place (he may still be so) with the result that a very ordinary Chinese port was converted into a really fine town. The harbour is a masterpiece. The wharves are really fine with their "go-downs" and railway running alongside the ships. Everything indicated the work of the methodical Hun. The buildings, though fine, were characteristically ugly, and many still had German advertisements and signs in German on them. The streets are excellently maintained. On each side of the asphalt road two rows of flagstones are laid down like railway lines, along which handcarts pass, thus avoiding the main road, and damage to it. The handcarts keep to their proper side of the road, and traffic is regulated very well indeed.

Tsing Tau was wrested from the Germans in November, 1914, by a combined force, and at the present moment is being administered by the Japanese. It fell without much opposition. After a little spell of shelling from the sea, and on the landing of an armed force, the Germans threw up the sponge. They could not bring themselves to submit their beloved Tsing Tau to shelling in face of certain ultimate capitulation.

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Now the rumour has it that the Peace Conference has decided that the Chinese, to whom Tsing Tau rightly belongs, and the Japanese who garrison it, are to be allowed to settle the fate of Tsing Tau between them.

If this be true, Tsing Tau is Japanese, and a fine ripe plum has fallen into their hands. The rich province behind Tsing Tau should not be lost sight of, and the importance of a fine port on the coast of China cannot be exaggerated. Once more I wonder whether there was or is an unsurmountable obstacle to making Tsing Tau international, as Shanghai is. Perhaps rumour is wrong. I hope so.

The Chinese Labour Corps were very quickly disembarked, and each man paid his wages as he landed on the wharf. Their next move was to get into a standing train, which is to take them to their destination somewhere up country.

Two out of the three Chinese Labour Corps officers were demobilised on the wharf, and the third entrained to accompany his battalion to their destination.

At 11.30 we cast off from the wharf, and are now at sea.

We have run into fog, and the hooter is buzzing every minute for seven seconds. It's a great nuisance, but everything is for some good, and apparently the hooter has a good effect in silencing talkative partners at bridge—it's difficult to tell a funny story or make a ribald jest with any success when interrupted by the wailing boom of a steamer's whistle.

May 9th.—Thick mist with rain; ran into a violent thunder-storm; got so bad that we anchored during the night.

May 10th.—In the evening the fog lifted, and we arrived at the mouth of the Yang-tse-Kiang River. The sea for some forty miles away from the mouth of the river is muddy, and at the mouth itself is the colour of pea-soup.

The entrance to the river is three to five miles wide, depending on the tide, and we slowly steamed up mid-channel, overtaking a Chinese warship, and anchored at the entrance to Shanghai Harbour alongside the *Empress of Russia*.

We should have transferred to this boat at Hong-Kong, but went on in the *Stentor* with the hopes of getting on to Shanghai quicker, and there catching a connecting boat to Vladivostock. We hoped we would be transferred to the *Russia* that night, as she was not sailing until next morning; but it was not to be.

May 11th.—We lifted anchor and steamed up the river into Shanghai Harbour, and tied up at the wharf. A launch took us off to the town part of the harbour and, being Sunday, we reported our arrival by telephone to the Senior Naval officer.

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He instructed us to go to the Astor House Hotel, which is the finest hotel in Shanghai, and really is quite a decent hotel.

The N.C.O. and naval ratings I conducted to the Hanberry Institute, an excellent institution run for the benefit of soldiers and sailors, and the men were made very comfortable there.

May 12th.—We presented ourselves to the Senior Naval Officer, who arranged that we should go overland through China and Manchuria to Vladivostock instead of by sea.

We were delighted at this prospect, and arrangements were made for us to leave next morning.

We got our passports from the Consul-General, and Messrs. Thos. Cook and Sons provided us with the necessary international travelling tickets. In the afternoon, by arrangement, I called on Lady Blank, who is the head of the British Women's Work Association in Shanghai, and was driven round by her to the store depot, where excellent clothing in the shape of underwear, warm and otherwise, was given to all officers and men of our party. Even mosquito nets were provided, and very pleased and grateful we all were for the thoroughly good outfit provided.

This Association has done very excellent work indeed in giving away all manner of comforts to officers and men joining the British Mission in Russia, and on all hands one hears the appreciation felt for work done by the Association.

Shanghai evidently extends a welcome to troops passing through, as everyone who has been through Shanghai sings praises about the piping good time he had. We all had a splendid time, everyone has been most kind to us during our stay in Shanghai, and we are all very sorry we are leaving to-morrow.

May 13th.—Directly after breakfast we drove off with our baggage to the station, and duly found our seats in the train, which left at 7.55.

The scenery was most interesting. The country was absolutely flat, and fairly thickly populated. The buildings were most picturesque, with roofs decorated with boat-shaped ornaments placed along the whole length of the roof.

Pagodas were plentiful.

What struck us very forcibly was the fact that every foot of ground was cultivated, and for hours on end there was not a break in the cultivation anywhere, save for hundreds and thousands of graves sticking up out of the green cultivated fields.

Chinese bury their dead in no particular place, and do not place the bodies under, but on the ground, and make a mound over them.

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The ordinary common grave consists of a conical-shaped mound any height up to four or five feet. The more important and largely respected people have correspondingly bigger graves. Some graves we saw were the shape of a haystack, and about ten or twelve feet high surrounded by a mud wall.

The conical-shaped graves had a wisp of grass on top invariably.

Graves were made in all kinds of places—in the middle of wheatfields, in the centre of footpaths, near houses, in fact were scattered about in every conceivable kind of place, very seldom indeed were graves grouped together in any particular spot.

After some six hours in the train we arrived at Pouchow, where we detrained and boarded a ferry steamer and crossed the canal, and entrained again for Tientsin. In about two hours we were off again, and the same interesting scenery was viewed as we sped along.

We arrived at Tientsin about five in the evening, and made for the Astor House Hotel, where, having ordered dinner, we went for a stroll. Many houses which had been occupied by Germans stood empty.

There were a number of American troops, also Chinese and Japanese troops, in Tientsin, and the town is consequently divided into different national sections.

The British section is policed by Sikh policemen, and we were able to find our way to the shops due to my being able to converse in Hindustani with the Sikhs.

We got back to the hotel about eight o'clock, and had an excellent dinner—a really first-class spread.

After dinner an officer came up and introduced himself, and took G. and me over to the club, where we regaled ourselves with some excellent wet nourishment in the shape of pre-war whisky. The club is a very fine building inherited from the Germans, who apparently had taken a lot of pains to make it an exceedingly comfortable institution.

After dealing with the whisky in a satisfactory manner, our newly made pal conducted us to see a show, where we enjoyed ourselves in a light-hearted manner till all was blue, and then hied ourselves back to the station in time to catch our train, which left at twelve o'clock midnight.

May 14th.—We put in a very good night's sleep in a sleeping-car, and awoke next morning early to find ourselves at Shan-haikwan, where we saw the Great Wall of China, which extended over hills and valleys. The wall is some 2,000 miles in length and some 50 ft. high, with watch-towers every 200 or 300 yards.

The wall was built by forced labour in order to keep the

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Tartars out of China, and the object was attained for a great many years.

At all stations there were Chinese soldiers on guard, "some" soldiers they were too.

It was apparently left to the option of the local N.C.O. as to whether on arrival of the train the men should stand at attention or no. Some looked very smart, and others the reverse, and one and all eyed the B.O. with great curiosity. One Chinese Tommy, looking like a tin soldier of the class purchased for a small boy's amusement, lounged up to "Two-and-threepence," and after toying with the buttons and badges and sampling the stuff a British tunic is made from by scratching it with his long finger-nails, ventured the remark "soulder," and stretched his mouth into a bewitching grin on receiving an answer in the affirmative.

At 7.30 p.m. we arrived at Mukden, a very old and historical place, and hastened across the road to the Yamato Hotel for dinner as we had not much time to spare. Once more we were served up with a first-rate dinner, attended and served by Japanese.

After dinner we changed our dollar money into yens and, of course, lost heavily on the transaction.

May 16th.—Train left Mukden at 10.50.

The sleeping berths were *à la Pullman* style. I got a top bunk and had great difficulty in getting gracefully undressed and into bed, owing to the fact that some Russian fairies and a cosmopolitan crowd took a lively interest in the apparently strange spectacle of people sleeping in different clothes from those worn during the day.

Seeing that we entirely disrobed and got into night attire, two or three went so far as to take off their top garments—we then lost interest in further proceedings as we drew the curtains across and fell asleep.

May 17th.—Had a splendid night's sleep, and arrived at Chang-Cheung, where we had breakfast at another branch of Yamatos Hotel. The Japanese military authorities took a lively interest in us, and followed us about, endeavouring to pronounce our names and designations which they had carefully recorded in various pocket-books.

I think that the little lads ought to be initiated into the meaning of "Oh, go to hell," as it got very wearisome when the twentieth nincompoop in uniform, sword, dagger, and pistol complete, enquired our names, rank, age, number of children, if any, and if not, why not, etc., etc.

On being politely requested by us to wend their way to a

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warmer climate they nodded, grinned, and bowed—but perhaps they did understand ; I shouldn't be at all surprised.

Chang-Cheung is a village, dirty and dismal, and the natural beauty was not improved by a steady downpour of rain.

We took a stroll round the "streets," and got back to the hotel, glad to get out of the ankle-deep mud and rain.

The conveyance which plied for hire consisted of a four-wheeled vehicle, a fourth cousin to a dilapidated phaeton, drawn by a miserable pony in the shafts, with another pony hitched on to the traces. This form of locomotion is called a *droski*, and the driver is in keeping with the turnout he drives.

Had a game of spilikins with an American.

Hotel fairly full, cosmopolitan crowd, French, Russians, and, of course, Japanese.

We entrained at 2 p.m.

The train was about the filthiest by a long chalk I have ever seen.

There was no room in the first class, so all four of us occupied a filthy second class carriage. The dirt and smell is indescribable, and it is no exaggeration to say that the lavatories were so filthy, and the effluvia so strong, that a pigstye full of pigs which had never left the premises for six months would compare very favourably with them.

When the train was travelling, the lavatories at the further end of the corridor reminded one continuously of their existence.

Of course there was no such thing as a dining car on this train, and at long stops we had to join in the general race for the "refreshment room" and hurriedly buy a *glass* of tea and a loaf of brown bread and some greasy concoction after the idea of a rissole.

In the race for the "buffet" we frequently won, and by blowing like grampuses on the glass of tea managed to swallow a fair percentage of it before the train moved off.

The train up to Chang-Cheung was clean, and the food fairly wholesome, the only drawback being that Chinese gentlemen who patronised the dining-car would insist on clearing their throats between courses and using the spittoon in a dreadful way.

I have heard the native of India, especially the night watchman, take five minutes in his efforts to clear his throat to his entire satisfaction until I thought that their insides must surely break from their moorings, but they, our Arian brothers, must take a back seat when competing with a Chinaman.

All the fattest and flabbiest Chinese imaginable seemed to have booked by the train we travelled by, and unfortunately never vacated the dining-car. They put their fat podgy faces down

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to mountains of greasy food and literally sucked up the contents of the dishes, using their knives and spoons to shovel in such stuff as resisted their powers of suction.

I have frequently heard five porkers eat out of one trough, and I can only compare the noise of a Chinaman eating to that of the merry five porkers in question.

In between the courses, as I have already said, the revolting practice was indulged in, necessitating the use of spittoons.

But the train to Chang-Cheung was beyond reproach compared to the trip through Manchuria.

The scenery was interesting, and the people one saw on the platforms doubly so.

Every kind of colour was used in the make-up of some uniforms, and these gaily decked individuals strutted up and down the platforms, trailing their long curved swords from a strap round their waist, in great style.

The Manchurians were interesting objects, clothed in rough thick cloth or sheepskins, with a transparent black conical shaped little hat, exactly like the national headgear the Welsh women wear.

May 18th.—We arrived at Harbin at 10.30 p.m. No one was there to meet us as, of course, no one knew of our arrival.

We walked all round the station and yard trying to find the R.T.O.'s office, but were unable to do so. Some Jap officers offered to get us accommodation in a hotel they had commandeered, and just as we were contemplating the offer, an American S. and T. sergeant passed.

We stopped and asked him where we could find some British officers.

He informed us that a dance was in progress at the Y.M.C.A. and most probably all the officers were at the dance. We thought this was most probable, and with the sergeant acting as a guide, we groped our way along the railway for a mile and a half to the Y.M.C.A.

The place was full of American officers, who welcomed us with open arms. No R.T.O. present. We were given a drink of good whiskey and stood watching the dance for a few minutes.

One particularly pretty girl attracted our attention, and she looked as if she danced well. Presently an American officer came up and asked me if I would like to dance. I thanked him very much, but said we had just arrived and had had a long train journey and were very dirty, and were going back to the station, where we had left two of our party.

He, however, pressed me to dance, and then, lo ! and behold, took me up to the pretty girl.

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She was a Russian, and could not speak English. I knew six words or less of Russian, but by mutual smiles and nods fixed up to dance the next dance. She was a very dainty creature, and had on a very stylish frock, and danced beautifully.

The Americans invited us to stay the night, but we were unable to do so as we had to get back to let the other two know what had been arranged. We, however, accepted the invitation to feed at their mess during our stay in Harbin.

We wended our way back to the station, and found that the R.T.O. had been round, and had arranged to see us next morning.

As there was no room for us to sleep in, we induced the station authorities to open up a compartment in an empty train for the night, which was done.

We had no blankets or any kind of bedding, so turned in on a bunk just as we were. It was damnably cold, and we spent a miserable night, and felt like a chewed piece of string next morning. There was no place to wash, so we got our tackle together and wended our way down to the American mess, where we stopped and had a much-needed wash and shave, and felt different beings for it.

The breakfast was excellent, and our hosts were kindness itself.

After breakfast we went to see the R.T.O. He knew nothing about us, and as we were booked to Vladivostock he said he would arrange to push us on, though we knew that our "mission" was at Omsk.

By coaxing the Station Commandant, a magnificent creature in blue uniform and blue cap with a red band, after the style that is favoured by our "Brass Hats," it was arranged that accommodation could be made for two officers that day, and that the rest would have to wait till next day.

Our heavy luggage was locked up as excess fare was due on it, and we stoutly refused to pay. More coaxing (?) and soft words (?) were used, and the commandant released the luggage free of charge.

Having got the luggage out we were informed that we could all go on to Vladivostock that day, so we got ready to push on.

The train was only seven hours late, and when it did arrive it was so crowded that only accommodation for two officers could be obtained. "Two-and-threepence" with G. decided to go on, and off they went, taking all our heavy luggage with them.

All station platforms are used by the townspeople as a promenade. Everyone dons his best clothes and strolls up and down. Margate and Blackpool front and pier are not in it with

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a Russian station platform. Why it is allowed beats me, but I was informed that people have nothing to do, so by mutual agreement all meet on the local station platform in the evening.

I would rather sit on a Russian platform and watch the wonderful sights and see the costumes, which beggar description, than see the finest revue in Town.

After seeing "Two-and-threepence" and G. off, we went off to a café where an orchestra, consisting of a small boy, who played the piano very well indeed, and his sister aged about 16, who was a first-class violinist, and Pa, who "tootled" on the 'cello, was in full progress.

The time was now about 11.30 p.m., and it was time to push along to the café chantant, so a party of six of us made a move. On arrival at the café we took a box and ordered supper.

The "turns" on the stage on the whole were good, especially the Russian dancing, which was excellent.

The audience were worthy of note, too—a mixed crew. One particularly magnificent Cossack officer attracted our attention. He strolled about in between the turns with his dark blue overcoat studded across the chest with cartridges, a silver belt round his waist, in which were thrust a jewelled dagger and pistol, and slung from his side was a magnificent sword.

His head was as clean shaven as a billiard ball, and this I consider very much spoilt the picture.

A very large number of Russian officers shave their heads clean. They say it's on account of the heat in summer—perhaps it is—some say —.

The lower class of Russians do not change their clothes during the winter, and the aroma from them is overpowering.

May 19th.—We got ready at 11 a.m. to entrain. The train was only two hours late, and on arrival it was found that there was no first class accommodation, only second. We managed to get the three N.C.O.'s berths, and by a great piece of luck both officers got a coupé in a bogie carriage which was attached for the benefit of a bank manager. We were in clover, everything was beautifully clean.

There was a guard of Chinese soldiers on our carriage, so we were able to leave the compartment at stations and nose about. The buffets at stations are wonderful shows. Crowds of people in strange and picturesque costumes and uniforms standing round the counters, and sitting down at tables munching buns, loaves, meat, etc., etc., ravenously.

Tea is always served in an ordinary drinking glass. Milk is not used, only sugar and a slice of lemon; and very good it is too, thus served up.

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The scenery from the train is very pretty. The railway itself is, in a way, unique. In some places it is possible to see the line over which the train has passed in three or four places.

The line winds round the hills instead of tunnelling through them, and there are very few bridges, the line running round the valleys instead of across them.

The journey from Harbin to Vladivostock takes 36 hours. We are nearing Vladivostock, and expect to get there at 10.30 p.m. G. and "Two-and-threepence" promised to meet us, and jolly glad we shall be if they do.

May 21st.—We were met last night by G. and "Two-and-threepence" and conducted to the mess just across the road from the station, where two plates of sandwiches and a tot of whiskey were awaiting us, due to the thoughtfulness of "Two-and-threepence" and G.

We reported our arrival, and received orders to proceed to Omsk.

There are two British Missions working in Siberia, the British Military Mission, which undertakes the training of the New Russian Army in all its branches, and the British Railway Mission, which is assisting in restoring the railway and transporting troops and military traffic.

G. and "Two-and-threepence" were held up on the train they came down on the day before we did.

The train stopped, and the Bolsheviks opened fire. The Chinese troops and Czecho-Slovaks returned fire. The Bolsheviks, some eight in number, who were only bent on train robbery, did not expect to meet any opposition, and hastily withdrew.

Though the distance was under 200 yards, and the Chinese and Czechs fired some 300 rounds, no casualties occurred, and the bandits got clear away.

One shot came between "Two-and-threepence" and G. and buried itself in the woodwork of the train. A miss is as good as a mile. Both British officers very sick. They had not rifles; both felt sure they could have done some damage.

We have to remain in Vladivostock for five days as we are going on by the weekly International train, and accommodation is being arranged.

Glad we have not to go on by a military post train, or with an ammunition train, as the journey to Omsk by such trains takes anything from three weeks to a month to accomplish and the international train only takes ten days, and ten days' train journey with no dining-car to speak of, and very uncomfortable otherwise, is long enough to suit most people.

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We were all sadly in need of a hot bath, so hied ourselves off to the "Russian" baths. I soaked in a salt hot bath for about half an hour, and then stood under a hot fresh water shower bath, where the soap came into play with great force.

The Russian baths are much the same as what are commonly known as Turkish baths.

May 21st.—I climbed the hill on which Vladivostock is built, and had a bird's-eye view of Vladivostock Harbour. It's a wonderful harbour with its protection of islands.

On the heights guarding the harbour there were the gun emplacements and ammunition dumps; all had been dismantled.

Some very fine buildings in Vladivostock. The British mess was the Bolshevik headquarters. The Czechs, when they took Vladivostock, destroyed the guns on the heights commanding Vladivostock and bombed the Bolshevik H.Q. The walls of the ante-room were splashed with blood, and the whole building resembled a slaughterhouse. All the walls were whitewashed, of course. There were no signs of any blood and thunder when we took over the building as the British headquarters.

May 22nd.—Went to a concert at the Y.M.C.A. given by the men of H.M.S. *Kent*. A very excellent show it was, and lots of good talent was exhibited by the large company. After the concert, went to supper. While at supper, noticed the sky very red, so investigated and found a fire was in progress.

Wended our way to the spot. One of the Red Cross warehouses on the wharf was on fire. Nothing could be done save to isolate the fire.

The fire brigade was truly a sight for the gods. A barrel on a cart drawn by horses, supplied the water to the hoses when vigorously pumped by hand-pumps.

The jet of water reached probably 15 or 20 ft. The firemen appeared to be about as intelligent as cockatoos, and actually directed the hose at the corrugated sheet iron sides of the warehouse, and let the water stream uselessly up against the iron.

A large piece of this iron wall fell back on to the heads of the firemen. We saw it tottering for some minutes before it eventually fell, and hoped that the crack it gave the firemen on their silly heads would wake them up. Our hopes were realised, as after coming in contact with the wall more intelligence was certainly displayed, and the water put to more use.

The Bolsheviks had threatened to burn the warehouse that very night, and had carried out their threat. After seeing the fire brought under control we wended our way home.

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May 23rd.—Nothing very interesting happened.

The Americans had a scrap with the Bolsheviks some thirty versts from Vladivostock.

A Russian officer came to the British headquarters in a nude condition. He had fallen into the hands of the Bolsheviks and they prepared him for a stringing up.

Having got the rope over a cross-beam they ordered the officer at the point of a revolver to put the noose over his own head.

The Russian took a desperate chance. With a swift swipe of the left hand he knocked the revolver up, at the same time planted his right fist square between the eyes of the leading executionist and ran like a hare, jinking for all he knew how, and managed to avoid the shots fired at his fleeing figure.

He got clean away, and came to the B.H.Q., where he was given a complete outfit.

Most mornings and evenings witnessed the shooting of Bolsheviks captured in the town.

Vladivostock, like all other towns in Siberia and Russia, is full of Bolsheviks, busy with propaganda work, and to the majority of the lower classes it is immaterial which Government is in power ; according to propaganda, in fact, they get higher wages and are allowed to do anything they please if they throw in their lot with the Bolsheviks.

May 24th.—Had a look at " Russian Island " ; an island in the harbour where the Russian Army is being trained with the help and under the supervision of the British Mission. We are equipping them with uniform complete with bandolier, water-bottles, webbing, etc. When this New Army is more or less fitted to take their place in the front line they are pushed up westwards. Unfortunately, very many of them, when they reach the front, walk over to and join the Bolshevik Army.

It is a pity. They are turned out in every detail like our Tommies ; it is bad luck on the latter that a shuffling lout should be mistaken for a British soldier. These New Army Russians are to be seen in most towns and public places and gardens slouching about with their dirty buttons, caps all on one side of their heads, or thrust at the back of their heads, and looking perfectly disreputable. Very few of the Russian public know that the British are fitting these men out, and the men themselves certainly do not know it—one or two only may realise from whence their uniforms have come—the vast majority are indifferent so long as they get their clothes.

The old Russian Army officer is a gentleman in every way, and feels very keenly the change caused by the Revolution.

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Many very inferior classes of youth are made officers these days. They take, apparently, no pride in themselves or what they represent. The old regular keeps as aloof as possible from such specimens of officers.

It is not the so-called officer himself who is to blame, so much as the authorities who make such people officers. These youths have no social status at all—education nil, and consequently discipline is an unknown word to them.

They appear in public dressed in a dirty, slovenly fashion, and their one object in life is to enjoy themselves.

Many times I have been told that the collapse of the armies is due to the fact that the officers think of nothing else except as to how they can best amuse themselves. I was given an opportunity of having long chats with the old class of Russian officers, as I was introduced to several English-speaking Russian officers. Two were young noblemen—the Marquis A. and Baron F.—I went about with them a good deal, and some very interesting facts relating to the present state of affairs were told me. In the evening we made up a party and had supper at the Be-Ba-Bo Café Chantant, situated in the main street. A vaudeville show, including excellent Russian dancing and humorous sketches went towards the making of a very pleasant evening. A. and F. were with us, and after the show we cleared the floor and had some dancing, getting home after the lark had risen.

The supper only cost us about 160 roubles each, not including a bottle of liqueur brandy, which cost 300 roubles, and the vodka which flowed at 60 roubles per bottle. Before the war the rouble was 10 to the £1, then it jumped to 40 to the £1, and at present is 150, and has been to 165. There are countless different kinds of notes, Kerenskies, Romanoffs, Kolchaks, in addition to the pre-war ones, and it is a terrible business getting notes changed. Pieces of paper exactly like a postage stamp represent 10 and 20 kopeks. Other pieces of paper, 3 in. by 1 in., represent anything from 1 rouble 25 kopeks to 5 roubles.

Then there are large 1 kopek notes, and the same size notes for 50 kopeks. Next we have the one rouble note, and any number of different kinds of notes for 10, 20, 50, 100 roubles, etc. There is no coin in circulation, and the filthy state of the notes, many hanging together with the aid of stamp paper can better be imagined than described. I am beginning to tolerate vodka.

Vodka must be drunk like a liqueur, and with something to eat. However much one drinks of it, and it does not take much to make one unsteady, one does not suffer from a "head" next

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day, so I am told, anyway I have not suffered from any ill effects, but perhaps I haven't drunk enough the preceding night to write from personal experience. I cannot get lively on vodka, yet I have seen some exceedingly good exhibitions of liveliness as the result of imbibing it.

At a Russian dinner a preliminary meal called a *sacouska* is partaken of. This consists of salads, sardines on toast, mushrooms, and every variety of *entrée* imaginable. At this meal vodka is partaken of liberally. Vodka is always poured out in a small liqueur glass, and the whole glassful drained at one gulp. After the *sacouska*, cigarettes are lighted, and then comes the ordinary dinner.

The *sacouska* is more than a meal in itself, and if one is not aware that the *sacouska* is only a preliminary canter, as it were, to the hard gallop, no room is left to do justice to the real meal which follows.

May 25th.—Spent the morning getting my things packed prior to entraining. Each officer going up was served with a rifle, and a hundred rounds of ammunition. In our party there were six British officers and four N.C.O.'s, two of whom were interpreters. The previous day I had bought a revolver from Ordnance and got 40 rounds of ammunition. Was glad to find that my friend Baron A. was travelling by the same train. He was a young officer in the Horse Artillery, and was on the General's Staff.

In the coupé next to ours, "A" and a Russian General were installed.

Nothing very exciting happened up to Harbin. We passed over the same ground that we had travelled over five days previously. It was most interesting seeing the way the railway turned and twisted round the valleys.

Towards nightfall on the second evening, a small boy with a red flag met the train about a mile from the station and pulled us up. On walking to the station found that a wagon had been derailed over the facing points. It was an education watching the authorities re-rail this wagon. After piling sleepers on the track parallel to the buffers of the wagon, a young pine-tree was put over the sleepers, and under the wagon between the buffers. Then about twenty men put their weight on the other end of the tree, and, *voilà*, the wagon rose a foot off the ground. While in this position, some ten men seized another young pine, and using it like a battering ram, gave the wagon a vicious push in the side, and the wagon, answering to the combined forces, by luck settled down on to the required metals.

It could just as easily have settled down on the track a yard

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the other side of the lines, but it must have thought it had played the fool long enough—five hours—and so gave in. No such thing as a "jack" was in evidence, though three or four engines were jerking off steam in the vicinity. Having rerailed the wagon, the train came on into the station, and we turned in for the night.

May 27th.—We reached Harbin at three in the morning. I got up and strolled round the station; nothing to see, and did not meet the R.T.O. whom I expected, so turned in again.

Country getting more hilly and mountainous, with rivers and cuttings, also nearing now the scene of Bolshevik operations.

May 28th.—Arrived at Chatal at 12.30 a.m., where Baron A. got off the train. Very sorry to part; we had become great friends. He introduced me to a Russian officer and his bride on the train, charming people who also spoke English, and we all three felt very sorry to part with A. The country as far as eye could reach was undulating prairie country, and the train passed through these "steppes" the whole day.

About twelve o'clock the train came to a sudden stand. We all got out and found that the dining car, which was next to the engine, was on fire. Two Russian officers climbed up on the roof of the car, and drew their swords and began to prod the iron roof of the car. The effect was most impressive. The officers had created a deep impression with the silent and admiring crowd, and having attained this object, they descended to mother earth and sheathed their swords, after wiping them in the orthodox style.

The engine driver and his assistants had no intention of allowing two officers alone to be the centre of public attraction, so they produced a hose some 15 ft. in length, and fastened one end of it on to a pipe somewhere round the front of the engine. They then proceeded to pull the hose over the top of the engine in order to reach the dining car, which was next to the engine. The hose was too short by some 30 yards to accomplish this object, it was therefore dragged under the engine; it was still 30 yards too short.

Nothing daunted, the driver turned on a tap, and a hot jet of water and steam burst forth from the hose's nozzle for fully three yards.

The water was still some 27 yards short of the scene of the fire. Leaving the hose on the bank with the water full on, the driver lifted his cap and scratched his head. This operation took about eight minutes, meanwhile we had great fears that the engine would run dry. However, with great presence of mind a fireman turned off the tap. The driver next examined

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his hand and fingers very carefully. I think he must have been looking for splinters—his head looked wooden enough.

The fire called for the attention of the crowd by an angry crackle.

A waiter from the car darted forth and, climbing up, savagely flung a *cup*—yes, a cup—of water at the spot which had crackled so angrily.

The initiative displayed by the waiter acted like magic on his confrères—they all followed his splendid example, and in as many minutes some twenty cups of water were flung at the fire. This had the effect of reducing a promising fire to a smouldering ember, and the authorities decided the train could safely run to the next station, where the fire could be effectively dealt with, and this was done.

And the morning and the evening were the fourth day of the journey.

May 29th.—The train passing through hilly country. Pine forests on either side of the line. Looking down into the valleys, one gets snatches of very pretty pieces of scenery. Rivers wind through the forests, and rugged hills tower up above the train; during twelve hours some forty-eight tunnels had to be passed through, but we passed through the largest group during the night.

We passed Siringar station, where we purchased some fish called siringar. A regiment—and the station itself—is named after this very famous fish, which can only be obtained in the locality of Siringar.

The fish is like a smoked herring, and we thoroughly enjoyed the additional diet.

After leaving Siringar we came to the edge of Lake Baikal. For twelve hours the train runs within a stone's throw of the water's edge. Although this is the end of May the lake is frozen over, and snow is frozen thick on top of the ice.

The weather up to this had been warm, but from the time of reaching the lake, it became distinctly cold. The trees also for many miles in the vicinity of the lake were stunted and leafless, though elsewhere all shrubs and trees were in full leaf. Baikal Lake is 700 miles long and 40 miles broad.

The sunset over the lake was a very pretty sight. The white shimmering ice reflected the red and pink rays of the sun, and the hills behind which the sun set were also reflected on the ice.

The sky was in keeping with the rest of the scenery, and a very pretty picture indeed was presented to us as the train sped along.

We arrived at Irkutsk at nightfall.

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In pre-war days a steamer made connection with the train, and passengers for Baikal, which is across the lake from Irkutsk, detrained, and were ferried across. The Bolsheviks have sunk the steamer somewhere in the lake.

In pre-war days the International train from Omsk to Petrograd was quite the finest in the world. The journey took eight days, and no pains were spared in making the journey as luxurious as possible, even to having a piano in the dining-car or drawing-room.

Very little of the luxurious cars remain, and the present international train is a very sorry affair.

When the shades of night had fallen, numerous forest fires could be seen extending for many miles in all directions.

May 30th.—More prairie land, termed the "steppes." Thousands of sturdy little ponies grazing, different batches of the ponies being in charge of mounted youths, who gallop about keeping their frisky charges together. These boys ride like Red Indians.

The ponies have wonderful staying powers, and frequently do a journey of 80 to 100 versts on end.

They are also largely used for work with the Chinese Army, and thousands of them find their way eastwards.

We also saw herds of camels, and their one large hump wobbled from side to side as the camels fled from the passing train.

Very wild-looking characters on the platforms. Mongolians and Manchurians dressed in weird thick cloth and skins, with fuzzy and woolly headgear to match. Shaggy Siberians and Russians with unkempt hair and bushy whiskers, long swords and top boots, shuffled up and down on the platform.

A great many officers and men on the train in wonderful uniforms—the majority of them wore spurs with rowels the size of half-crowns. The jingle made by the Russian spur is as noisy as a vigorously shaken tobacco tin with a marble in it.

The spurred heroes on the train jingled up and down the corridors and on the platform at stations where the train stopped. On making enquiries I found that these "knuts" were not railway cavalrymen, as I first supposed them to be, but that mounted officers never take their spurs off. If this be true, this fact must sometimes result in the wives of the married ones being quite cut up about it.

Met three French officers on the train, two of whom spoke English very well indeed. Made the discovery that one of them was at a school in North Wales which used to play my

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preparatory school at footer. Both of us knew mutual friends. The world is small.

All three officers from the Regiment of Chasseurs, nicknamed "The Blue Devils."

Passed trains of 4·5 guns coming up to the front. Some fine muddling has taken place in the despatch of war material to the Russian Front.

In one case, railway trucks were despatched to Archangel and the wheels for same arrived at Vladivostock. In another case, guns were sent to Vladivostock and the ammunition to Archangel.

Such cases are not by any means rare.

The problem now is : Are the wheels and ammunition going to swap places, and if so, how ? (When giving the answer, draw a map, putting in the principal rivers and towns, and say for what the latter are noted, and the reasons for it—if any—in triplicate—Army forms should not be used. Postal Order for 2s. 6d. should be enclosed with each attempted solution.)

Passed more guns and armoured cars manned by Czechs. We are now nearing the danger zone, and the Russian Colonel is running about tackling his young officers. They have only some seven or eight rifles between them and these have only just been picked up at the last station. The revolvers carried by the majority of the officers are rather useless-looking, automatic things.

Nothing happened, so turned in for the night, as expect to be in the danger zone to-morrow early.

Passed a rough scaffold—just a branch supported between two forked trees. Good enough when the time comes to get a pull on the rope with a Bolshevik at the business end of it. The Bolshevik lines on this front are up round Ufa, but bodies of Bolsheviks 10 to 100 strong are in this vicinity interfering with our lines of communication.

Very few men appear to be in the fields and villages, only women. Without doubt these villagers give information (whether willingly or unwillingly is uncertain) to the Bolsheviks, and the railway staff themselves are in the pay of the Bolsheviks.

If villagers do not help the Bolsheviks their villages are destroyed. If they give information against the Bolsheviks, the villagers are wiped out.

On the other hand, if the villagers keep in with the Bolsheviks they are well paid for any help rendered, and are well treated.

Near this spot, some 250 versts from Irkutsk, the Bolsheviks cut the metals of the railway and turned the rails to one side.

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They chose this spot as it was on a curve. A railway employee standing at the other side of the curve showed a green light to an oncoming express. The train ran off the metals and turned turtle down the steep bank.

The employee confessed later to receiving 4,000 roubles for his treachery, but it did not do him much good as he is at present dangling at the end of a rope.

We passed the train this morning, and a fine wreck it looked.

May 31st.—Early this morning a knock came to our compartment door. I told S. not to answer, as the old woman who sweeps the floors does her job at a horribly early hour, and I was going to discourage the practice.

The knock was repeated three times, so S. got up, and found that the young Russian bride, the newly-wedded wife of the Russian officer, both of whom we had got very friendly with, was there to tell me that the Russian officers were dressing prior to going on guard.

She had taken the trouble to come and tell me this in order to give me a chance of taking my turn on guard, as she said that she was certain that the British officers would be angry if they knew that they had slept while the Russians went on guard.

I was very grateful to her, and I roused the others. We were all very grateful to the lady, as we had not understood the situation, and the Russian officers did not like to explain matters to us in case they were misunderstood.

We hastily loaded our rifles and slipped on our revolvers.

It was raining, so I put on my trench coat, and at the first stop went to the front of the train. There were seven Russian officers on the engine. They were delighted to see us, and the Colonel in charge, who was a Russian V.C. and had been wounded eleven times, explained the situation to us.

The train had just entered the danger zone.

We offered to take charge of the train whilst he and his officers went to the dining-car for tea. The offer was gratefully accepted.

The Colonel instructed us that we should get down off the engine on the side opposite to that attacked by the Bolsheviks, and get under the engine and return the fire.

The train then started. Five of us got up in front of the engine and two in the cab.

Those in front divided themselves into two groups. Three sat down on the platform between the buffers, and S. and I took the observation post on the right and left of the engine. It was our job to watch the railway for "breaks" and also keep a sharp look-out for the "Bolos."

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The rain came down, and it was damnably cold flying through it.

After two hours on guard on the front of the engine, we were relieved, and returned along the engine by the footplate to the cab. There we toyed with our revolvers, as none of the drivers or firemen were to be trusted, and on any signs of treachery being exhibited we were instructed promptly to plug them.

I had a "S. and W." revolver, which was rather admired by the Russian officers. It looked a formidable weapon, especially when compared with the small automatic.

At eleven o'clock we passed two trains in rapid succession. Both were wheels upwards, and both locomotives wrecked.

We were relieved for half-an-hour for breakfast, and returned to the engine, where the guard was doubled. We had some seventeen rifles all told, and perhaps double the amount of revolvers of different kinds and shapes, but the Colonel felt that his little force was good enough to beat off any attack such as was expected from marauding bands of Bolsheviks.

We passed three more wrecked trains and locomotives.

All stations had been burnt and sacked.

One station had been occupied by the Bolsheviks, who intended making a clean smash up of the railway, but a Czech armoured car came along and shelled the enemy out.

I took some good photographs of the "ruins." The bridges are strongly guarded, and the line patrolled by men and armoured cars, but 3,000 miles of line passing through thick forests is a difficult thing to guard, and it is the simplest thing in the world to cut the line and derail or hold up trains.

Passed safely up to now. Am writing in the saloon, as we have stopped for the night. At sunset an armoured car joined us and ran ahead of us for 40 or 50 miles.

No sign of the Bolsheviks—possibly they are satisfied with their handiwork for one day, as we passed a wrecked train which had been overturned this morning, and the evidences of the injured and killed are still fresh on the sides of the wrecked cars.

June 1st.—Train went on next morning. Yesterday we did roughly eleven hours on guard. My trench coat is ruined by grease and filth, and we all looked sorry objects after we had been on the engine a few hours. The smuts and grease are thick on Russian engines, and the uniforms and greatcoats of the French who joined us for a spell, no longer are the gay, clean garments they were.

Passed another train lying on its back down the bank. The locomotive was doubled up, and looked very pathetic.

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All small stations in ruins—burnt and looted by the Bolsheviks. One of the larger stations taken by the Bolsheviks was turned into a temporary headquarters for them. A Czech armoured train came along and shelled them out of it, and the station is now a total wreck.

June 2nd.—Arrived at Omsk, the journey taking eight days. On arrival found that the British Mission was at another station. After a lot of worry and fuss we got our baggage out, and leaving an N.C.O. in charge we entrained into a “shuttle” train, and in half-an-hour found ourselves at our destination. We made our way to a train standing in a siding, which was used as headquarters of the “Railway Mission.” After a short spell we were ushered into the presence of the General, who said he had been expecting us since February last, and some of us since last November.

Apparently there was no mess, as we were instructed to go into the town to a café for our meals.

There was a large building which was being used as living quarters by a few British officers, and we were told that our baggage could be placed in one of the empty rooms.

A cart was sent off for our kit, and meanwhile we wended our way to the town.

The “café’s” are really a joke, and the best are nothing better than fourth-rate eating-houses, and are about as dirty as they can be.

We were mighty hungry by this time, and quite a little inclined to murmur about the want of thought on the part of the Powers-that-be.

It was the same all along. No one knew of our coming, no one knew anything about us. No one ever met us, and when we did dig out people, after a long journey, on arrival in a strange town inhabited by a still stranger people, we were invariably given to understand that it was everyone for himself and the devil take the hindmost.

S. and I groped our way to the best café in the town. It was situated in some “gardens” near the river, and a “phoo phoo” brass band was blaring away.

The whole kaboodle was known as the “Aquarium.” It was certainly a fishy looking spot. We paid to pass into the gardens, and wandered up to the eating-house. There was one large room open in front, with small tables and chairs dotted about. Selecting a table, we mustered what Russian we knew, and asked for a menu.

There was no such article in stock we were told. Feeling we had made a *faux pas* we asked what the “billy” fare was,

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and in reply were informed that some horrible sounding dish was in process of cooking. We manœuvred about like this for some time, and finally ordered a bottle of beer.

As nothing to eat was forthcoming we ordered "tea cakes," and a pretty concoction they were.

The "beer," the so-called beer, was a concoction made from bread and yeast, and was sour to boot.

We swilled a couple of bottles of this wash and devoured some "perozonies," which, being interpreted, means tea cakes, and felt dissatisfied, but the pangs of hunger were allayed.

We sat in the gardens for some time admiring the beauty and fashion. A British Staff Officer, a truly lovely bird with red tabs and ribbons galore, entered the gardens—he was well fed—or at any rate looked it, and we envied him. A girl was with him—she looked very nice, and we envied him all the more.

S. and I felt "lonely," and drank more "beer," but we were without good cheer.

A few more B.O.'s entered the gardens—they also looked happy and had fairies tacked on to them, and also looked well fed. Soon the gardens were crowded with a cosmopolitan crowd, truly a sight for the gods. We were the recipients of a few smiles from the gentler sex, but were certain we had not met the donors of the gladsome glint.

Joy of joys—we spied our friends from the train, the Russian officer and his wife. They spied us and made straight for us, and soon we were full of cheer.

The French officers we had met on the train also joined us, and the merry party was complete.

We stayed till about 11.30, and then tramped back two miles to our quarters.

Bare boards provided beds—and after twisting about in a couple of blankets for an hour or two, fell asleep.

June 3rd.—Next morning, at eight o'clock, I got up and took a stroll round the passages in pyjamas to have a "look see."

Found an N.C.O. who showed me a place where a bath could be obtained.

Hurried back for bath equipment, and wended my way to an outhouse where a great wooden trough took the place of a bath.

Hot water was forthcoming, and a much-needed bath was partaken of.

Hun and Austrian prisoners stoked the furnace which provided hot water.

A British N.C.O. in charge from the Middlesex Regiment, told me all about the doings of that famous regiment at Omsk.

I asked whether it was possible to obtain a hot drink as I had

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a vacuum amidships. He said he would see what he could do. While in the midst of ablutions, he entered with a steaming mug of hot coffee.

I got outside of this during my bath, and felt this was luxury indeed. After dressing I again reported myself to the General, and for the fifth time full details of my several accomplishments were duly noted.

I was told that I would have to proceed up to the front and take charge of a section of the railway communications.

From Vladivostock to Omsk the Americans were helping the Russians to control the railway, and from Omsk to the front the British had charge.

I reported myself to Major T., who was general supervisor, and he instructed me to get ready to push off next day.

I had been told by "people who knew" at Vladivostock not to take any pots or pans or camp kit along with me or any provisions, as the mess at Omsk provided for everything!

The Military Mission mess at Omsk certainly were fairly well equipped, judging from the meal or two I had there, and I should have been well off had I been remaining at Omsk.

Nothing could be bought at Omsk at all—so there was nothing to do but to trust to luck.

I had trusted to luck for the past month in getting my meals in the best way I could from all kinds of sources, and had developed a habit of purchasing a chicken and meat rissoles stuffed with grease while travelling, and eating these provisions with my fingers—not having knives or forks or plates, and had become as expert as any savage in tearing fowls to pieces—so was not at all dismayed at the prospect of continuing in this way.

I was instructed to grope my way down to Omsk Station and look for car No. 3001 which was lying somewhere in the yard at Omsk.

Of course my query as to whether any transport was available for the purpose of getting my kit from one station to the next, was a silly one—and I was told that this wasn't France, and this wasn't the Army, but a Mission.

I got a droski hauled by two tired ponies, and bumped my way over impossible roads to Omsk Station.

I shelled out 40 roubles for this pleasure, and my kit was dumped on to the platform, which was thronged by the usual promenading crowd.

The problem then arose as to how I was to get my kit to the travelling wagon, should I be so fortunate as ever to find it.

Leaving my kit on the platform and trusting to my old pal Luck again, that no one would take a fancy to it, I wandered

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about the extensive and muddling yard looking for car No. 3001. I found it in record time—an hour and a half.

Not being a Russian scholar it was with great difficulty I coaxed, by exhibiting filthy rouble notes, two seedy-looking tramps to shoulder my kit.

After going a hundred yards one of the louts collapsed with my well-filled trunk, which burst open, and my things flew in all directions. He smiled—of course it was funny—but with an effort he pulled himself together and commenced to jamb my things back into the trunk out of sight of the admiring crowd which had collected.

The crowd were amazed at my mixed language—as in my haste to tell the buffoon responsible for the incident what I thought of him, I indulged freely in English and Hindustani in endearing terms. I had forgotten what Russian I knew, which is always the case in such circumstances.

It's a terrible business travelling through Russia at any time unless one has an interpreter, and at a time like the present it is almost an impossibility to do so.

Interpreters were very scarce from the very start, so I was glad I did some hard work on the language during the voyage.

I eventually arrived at car No. 3001, and found two officers already ensconced in it.

I introduced myself and told them that I had not a thing in the way of eatables with me, and could only sport a cup, plate (enamel), and a knife, fork, and spoon (tin), which I always carry in my haversack.

The train was booked to leave at six o'clock p.m., and it was now four o'clock. Knowing a little about Russian punctuality by this time, I resolved to hie me back to the town with a view to purchasing some stores.

I took the shuttle train back to the small station and walked a couple of miles to the British Military mess, a mess which kindly managed to give meals to a few of the Railway Mission who had no mess to go to. I had a good dinner, and met many officers who knew mutual friends, many being from different regiments stationed in India.

At half-past eight I 'phoned to the big station to enquire how late the train I was leaving by was running, and was informed that the train was in the station, and would leave in half an hour.

I fled helter-skelter from the mess, and legged it down the street. I hailed a droski drawn by a fleet-looking black horse, and off we went at a fine old pace.

Going down the hill from the mess the horse fairly let itself

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go, and the wild-looking driver shouted out a challenge to the driver of a fine-looking grey horse which was speeding along the way we were going, and a top-hole race took place through the main street of Omsk. People skipped out of our way and stood to look at the race.

The droski drawn by the grey horse contained two Russian officers who took a keen interest in the race, and seemed keen on winning, and on recognising the British uniform cheerfully saluted as we flew along.

I felt keen on winning also, and yelled to the driver that he would get an extra 15 roubles if he pulled off the race.

Round corners we did the two-wheel trick, and narrowly missed different kinds of vehicles and foot passengers.

One gay Cossack galloping in the opposite direction with his red coat flying in the breeze we missed by inches.

The race lasted fifteen minutes, and round the last corner we got the inside of the other droski, and pulled off the race by about two lengths. My driver was so pleased about it that he would only take the legal fare, and refused the extra 15 roubles.

The two Russian officers and self exchanged salutes and smiles, and parted.

On arrival at the station found that the train was in, but that the car 3001 had not yet been attached. I went to the R.T.O., but he did not know where the car was.

The time was nine o'clock. The car was not attached till one o'clock next morning, when I turned into bed, having wandered about for three hours trying to find the car. Of course, I had no provisions, but trusted that I would be able to purchase something to eat at stations *en route* where the train made long stops.

The two other officers were already in the car, one was booked for the same station as myself, and the other was for a station 240 miles beyond.

We turned into our bunks and were soon asleep.

June 4th.—Next morning I awoke at ten o'clock, and washed and dressed, and prepared to hop out at the first stop to get some tea or coffee.

The other officers, however, had provisions with them as they had entrained at a station where provisions could be purchased, and they provided meals for me. I purchased different things at stations to swell the larder, and we existed fairly well on simple but wholesome fare.

We travelled the whole day through ordinary country, and nothing very exciting happened.

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We passed trainloads of refugees fleeing from the Bolsheviks. Ordinary four-wheeled wagons were filled with men, women, and children, with just their personal belongings. On the whole they looked cheerful and well fed.

Every station, and every available house and room was filled with refugees, some of whom had fled from Petrograd and from towns east of Petrograd, as the Bolsheviks advanced.

CHAPTER III

WITH THE WHITE ARMY

June 5th.—Arrived in Kurgan, my destination for the time being. I went over to look at a room which had been arranged for W. and myself.

It was in a barrack occupied by Russians. One look at the room was quite sufficient. I would rather sleep on the steppes than in such a place.

I had in my possession a letter which a Major in Omsk had written to a Mr. B., who was an engineer employed by a British firm at Kurgan. Armed with this letter, I went off to find Mr. B., who was an Englishman.

After a fifteen minutes' walk I came to the premises of the firm, and saw a building with "British Pro-Consol" written up on the door.

I knocked, and a Russian servant came to the door, and in my best Russian I asked for Mr. B. She asked me to step inside, and showed me into a dining-room, where after waiting ten minutes, a lady came in.

She was from Lancashire—I spotted it at once.

The lady—Mrs. H. by name—volunteered to show me Mr. B.'s house, and off we went.

The house was only a hundred yards away. B. was not in, but Mrs. B. asked me to wait until her husband returned, as he was expected back every moment.

Mrs. H. bid adieu. She had only been in Russia a few years, but spoke English just as a Russian-speaking English person does—only the Lancashire accent was well in evidence.

I was left to exercise my Russian with Mrs. B. I had never had the opportunity before to talk Russian with a lady who could not speak anything but Russian, and I fairly got the wind up.

However, I rolled up my cuffs and put my ears back, as it were, and fairly floundered about.

Mrs. B. was very kind, and helped me express myself, and pretended she understood everything I said—I hope she didn't understand anything I did not wish to say! Such things are quite easily done in Russian.

Presently B. came in, and I handed him his letter. He said

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there was a bungalow next door which was vacant, and that W. and I could occupy it.

He spoke very little Russian though he had been married some two years, as I say, and his wife spoke no English at all. She told me later through the medium of an interpreter that her husband could not learn Russian and he simply sat and stared at her, and dumb charades were freely indulged in when conversation was necessary.

June 6th.—We moved into our bungalow and unpacked our boxes. About time too. They had been shut since leaving Glasgow, and the stuff we had purchased for Russian summer and winter sorely needed an airing.

It was a treat to get into the house.

W. had a Chinese boy with him, and we purchased some wood, and started a fire in the brick cooking stove.

We got some bread, butter, eggs and smoked sausage at the station, and carried it up to our bungalow. The first meal was a howling success as we had only to boil eggs.

June 7th.—Got up at eight o'clock and helped China boy to light the fire. Cooked some more eggs and fried some bacon, which we had purchased.

I was minus a fork, and W. had only one, so I used a hunting knife I possessed, and used a pair of scissors in place of a fork.

Our neighbours enquired of us as to how we were progressing, and we replied that we were in great form.

We went to the station after breakfast, where we were both introduced to the Russian Station Commandant, the Czech and Russian Military Commandant, and divers other people.

The Allies are financing the railway, and are jointly controlling it.

My job at Kurgan is to get hold of the ropes, and gradually, in time, to run the show. W.'s job is to do ditto so far as the locomotives are concerned.

Having finished shaking hands with a hundred and one people, I told my interpreter who had accompanied us, that he could go, and we went back to the bungalow and continued unpacking.

June 8th.—More fire lighting and cooking, find I am getting good at cooking. W. is good at other household work, but both resolve not to let this continue.

I went over to the prison camp and interviewed the Commandant. The camp contained German and Austrian prisoners.

Arrangements were made for a Hun prisoner to do the work of "general" at our bungalow, and he was told to report himself to us next morning.

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June 9th.—The Hun arrived at eight o'clock. A big, strong-looking fellow—but required a wash badly.

He got busy and cleaned up the house generally.

Speaks very little English, but knows Russian. So does China boy, and the two of them get on very well together.

Went down to the station and got a list of things the Commandant was short of, and fired in an indent for them to headquarters.

Returned for dinner at six—nothing ready, so tackled the inevitable egg. China boy said he didn't know how to cook. I hastily assured him I would soon teach him.

The Hun tried his best to help, but is like a bull in a china shop. W. and self resolve this state of affairs must really cease. Went to the gardens and saw wonderful sights in the shape of officers and the fair sex promenading round and round a bandstand. The stand contained some eight or nine men who blew vigorously into different kinds of brass instruments, and collectively produced music of sorts. Back at 11.30, and to bed.

June 10th.—The China boy was clever this morning. He actually got the fire lighted all by his little self—for the first time. Consequently the eggs were boiled in time for nine o'clock breakfast.

Had a trying time at the station endeavouring to obtain information about different things.

I asked for a list of all the staff working at the station, and a statement showing how each man is employed.

I then went round checking this form.

Many men whose names were on the list were *non est*. On making enquiries further, found they were sick.

I asked whether a sick report had been made to the doctor. Answer—yes.

Asked to see one. A report was produced, and I was able to read sufficient Russian to discover that the report did not refer to the man I happened to be enquiring about.

Apologies were forthcoming for the stupid (?) mistake (?) on their part, but as many such "mistakes" had occurred, it left me wondering whether it was possible that fictitious names were entered on the list in order to draw the wages. One thing I felt certain about; my enquiries were not popular or encouraged.

Arrived back for supper.

The meals in this country consist of breakfast, dinner in the middle of the day taking place of lunch, and a sort of high tea-supper arrangement at about 7 p.m.

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June 11th.—Went to the gardens again to see the sights. The fairies are really extraordinary in their get-ups. Of course the people one meets and sees at a time like this represent solely the working class, and the majority of the officers one sees about are undoubtedly drawn from this class.

Was introduced to a lady and her daughter, both of whom speak English fluently, having lived in England for some years.

The lady before the Revolution was Maid of Honour to the Czarina, and her late husband a very high official in the service of the Russian Government, carrying with it the title of Excellency.

The daughter, aged about twenty, a really charming girl. Very refreshing to meet English-speaking persons.

Both were refugees and had arrived at this place after a six weeks' journey in droskies, or rather sleighs, as they left Orenburg State in winter.

Madame E. owned three magnificent houses, one at Petrograd, one at Moscow, and one at Orenburg. She had seven sons and three daughters. Her sons were all in the Army, some of them being in the Russian Household Cavalry and Footguards.

I saw all their photographs, and fine fellows they look.

Mrs. E. has had no news of them for three or four years. She escaped from Orenburg with her youngest daughter, her other two daughters being married were away at the time the Bolsheviks captured the town.

She told me that when the Bolsheviks took the town they suddenly walked into her house with an armed guard and demanded a large sum of money; she replied that she could not give so big a sum, as she didn't possess it.

They persisted that Mrs. E. had this money in the bank, and gave her warning that she would be shot if she did not produce it.

Meanwhile they ransacked her beautiful house and left.

That night, leaving her affairs in the hands of a trusted agent and her trusted servants, she packed up in two trunks all the valuables she could possibly carry in two sledges and, together with her daughter, fled eastwards.

Since that time Orenburg has been recaptured by the Russian troops and again fallen into the hands of the Bolsheviks.

Madame E. therefore does not know whether her house is intact or otherwise, and whether she has any of her fortune left or not.

She owns most of the estates round Orenburg, and hopes that when the present state of affairs improves she will be able to return and come into her own again.

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June 12th.—Colonel N., an American railwayman in charge, visited this section. I was introduced to him, and he asked me how I was progressing with the work.

I replied that a lot of forms and statistics were being called for, and the information gained thereby was as much use as a sick headache.

Major N. and the Colonel, self, and half a dozen others visited the different Commandants.

On reaching the office of the Czech Commandant everyone shook hands with everyone who happened to be in the office at the time we entered.

We all found seats, and Colonel N. turned to his interpreter, a tall, nice-looking man, who answered to the name of Max, and said: "Now Max, just start right now and tell the Czech Commandant that we, the Allies, know how much the Czechs have done for the railway, and that had it not been for the Czechs there would be no railway." Max duly put this speech into Russian, and the Czech Commandant, an exceedingly nice boy of about 24, looked at Colonel N. and said "Da," which being interpreted means yes. "Now Max," continued the Colonel, "tell the Czech Commandant that we, the Allies, realise fully just exactly what the Czechs have done for the army, and that were it not for the Czechs there would be no army fighting where they are right now, and tell the Commandant, Max, that I was right there myself, and I have seen what the Czechs have done, so I guess I know. Tell him, Max," and Max tells him, and the Czech Commandant said "Da." He really looked scared by this time. "Now Max," continued the Colonel once more, "tell the Czech Commandant that we, the Allies, realise fully what the Czechs have done for the railway and the army." Max did so, and the Czech said "Da." I really refrained from catching anyone's eye. We were all much impressed, but W. and I were nearly sick laughing afterwards, as we both knew the Czech Commandant very well indeed, having had a few informal dinners together, and how he could have kept a solemn face and said "Da" each time without moving a muscle of his face beats me.

After leaving the Czech Commandant's office, all trooped off to the Russian Commandant's office. Luckily for the man, he was out, so we trooped off to the Colonel's car, and he sent his kind regards to the Station Commandant.

On our way to the car we stopped and shook hands with a large number of people. One person I shook hands with five times that morning. We came to several groups of people. In one group a locomotive foreman was explaining to several

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of his subordinates some matter unconnected with the British Railway Mission. However, we passed too close to the group to ignore the fact that one of the interpreters knew one of the workmen, and before it could be prevented our party was vigorously shaking hands all round with the other party.

Each group contained a mutual friend of one of our party, and the rest of us had to suffer hearty handshakes with some terrible-looking scalliwags. I am sure we appeared to be mad to Russian onlookers, but perhaps we didn't, as they are mad on the subject of handshakes in Russia.

On arrival at the Colonel's car, the Station Commandant met us. He had with him a few underlings, and we shook hands all round and took seats.

The Colonel produced a map of the station yard, and the Commandant was asked to explain the different dots and dashes and show on what lines different work in connection with shunting was done.

Now the Commandant was an ex-Sergt.-Major, and stood rigidly to attention when he spoke. We called him the Ramrod.

The Ramrod did not speak; he was a big man, and he bellowed. In the small compartment the noise was deafening.

Not only did Ramrod bellow, but he spoke at express speed, and once started could not be stopped.

The Colonel put a little pert question which required a three-worded sentence for reply, but Ramrod hopped on to the question as soon as it was out of the interpreter's mouth, and off he went at a terrible bat; our combined efforts at "Da-da-da" were of no avail. He, however, paused for breath after a few minutes, and the two interpreters present managed to stop a further flow of explanation from Ramrod.

The next question put by Colonel N. was a more guarded one, but once more the Ramrod made the best of his opportunity to talk. We smiled wearily as he went on babbling at a terrible pace, and waited for him to finish. With an upward breath he came to a halt, and eyed each of us in turn. We smiled and waited for the interpreter to tell us what Ramrod had gabbled about. Before the interpreter could collect his thoughts, off Ramrod went again, and we thereupon gave up the idea of getting any information from Ramrod. When he came to a stop the interpreter thanked him very much, and said that we now all understood everything, and were much obliged to him. Ramrod smiled his thanks, bowed from his hips, in turn, to all present, and accepted a cigarette proffered by the Colonel.

We then prepared to bid Ramrod adieu. Having lined up,

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we extended our hands, which Ramrod shook vigorously, and he bowed himself towards the car's door.

At this juncture an over-effusive young officer nodded a friendly farewell to Ramrod, who at once darted back and shook the nodding offender's hand. The inevitable consequence, of course, was that once more we had all to shake hands with Ramrod.

The handshaking custom is an absolute curse. It is amusing and entertaining at first, but gets very tiresome anon.

The same afternoon the Colonel and company left by train West.

June 13th.—Went down to the station after breakfast. It is very difficult making the Hun and China boy understand.

China boy talks a little Russian, and, I suppose, Chinese. Hun also talks a little Russian, and, I suppose, German. W. and I speak English and a few words of Russian.

I called the Hun up this morning, and told him I wanted him to go to the Bazaar and get in some provisions.

The Hun's name is Arront.

"Now Arront," I said, "do you understand what a bazaar is?"

"Bunzar, Bazar? Yes, Bunzar! Oh Bazar, ja, ja, ja, jar, Bazar, ja, ja, ja, ja, Bazar, ja, ja."

"Very well, now get vegetables, see?" I spoke Russian, and he only said ja, ja, twice. "Also get some ice—do you know what ice is?" "Ace, ace?" "Yes, ice, ice." "Ace? Oh, ja, ja, ja, ja, ace, ja, ja, ja," said Arront, after I had given a dum charade show in my endeavours to convey the meaning of the word ice.

This kind of thing went on for 20 minutes, and I felt somewhat weakened after it, but started for the station in good trim. I was duly met by an interpreter at the office.

"Now, Rudenoff," I said, "let me see, where did you learn to speak English?" Apparently he had been in Australia five years, and also worked on some Chinese railway.

His English was far from perfect, so I adopted a very simple baby talk when speaking to him.

Well, the first thing to be done that morning was to ascertain whether the Russian authorities had any regulations relating to the electrical instrument used in connection with the running of trains between stations.

"Now, Rudenoff, do you know what a block instrument is? You know, the instrument used for giving 'staffs' to the drivers of trains?" "Yes, yes, I understand. I have worked on railways for many years—I know, yes, yes."

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" Well, Rudenoff, I want you to ask the Station Commandant " (as the stationmaster is called), " whether he has the instructions telling him how these instruments should be worked."

" You and I, Rudenoff, know all about these instruments, don't we ? I wonder if the stationmaster knows ? " " Yes, sir, we know, and I understand, I know." " Well, just ask the stationmaster for the rules for working his instrument. You know what I mean by rules ? Regulations, instructions, etc. You understand ? "

" Yes, sir, I understand, I know rules—rule has twelve inches, I know, sir ! " So I started off afresh, and eventually discovered that the stationmaster had no rules, never had any, and did not want any, and so that was that.

Doing technical work with an interpreter who is a first-class man is a very tedious and difficult undertaking, but when the undertaking is done with a third-rate interpreter, it's an exhausting business.

In the evening went to the gardens, and decided to have a look at the variety entertainment which is held every Friday, which day is set apart as " officers' day."

Officers and their friends only are admitted to the gardens and show on officers' night.

I never saw so many disreputable objects in my previous visits to the gardens as I did on Friday. The gardens were full of peasant girls either strolling in company with each other, or hooked on to the arms of officers. And the officers—the majority just looked as if they had stepped off an engine after a twelve hours' journey, having previously adorned themselves in weird and fantastic uniforms.

One or two objects with officers' badges up had trousers which commenced at the feet like slacks, and on reaching above the knees widened out into riding breeches.

Others continued the slacks fashion half way up the thigh and then broke out into a tiny bulge about a foot wide on each side of the thigh, and in again in time to form a wasp-like waist. The effect was impressive, or should have been, but cigarettes had to be suddenly lighted to hide our unseemly mirth.

Some of the gallant officers were in dirty uniforms which had once been the property of our War Office for issue to Tommy Atkins. General service buttons completed the uniforms so far as representing their British origin went. The trousers and tunics had been altered to suit individual tastes, and the result was mirth-provoking in the extreme.

Many officers fancied their chance best in long buttoned boots

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and spurs, others in gum boots, a few in wrongly tied puttees, none simply in slacks and boots or shoes.

Tastes in spurs differed considerably, but one common object there was, and that was an irresistible hankering for noisy spurs, so that when the foot moved the spur made a noise as sweet as the tinkle of a bell, and when the proud possessor met an acquaintance, the click of his heel when spur met spur could be heard fifty yards away. Incessantly one heard the ring and clink of the spurs, the effect thus produced being marred considerably by the majority of the miserable objects responsible for the production of the martial sound.

Of course there were many officers who were cleanly and properly dressed, and they looked with stern disapproval at the "upstart" officers.

The old regime of Russian officer does not take kindly to the Rag Tag and Bobtail apology for an officer.

We went to the show, and General C. spotting us, at once provided front seats for us.

The E.'s were with us, and Miss E. sat next to me, and explained things acted and spoken which I could not follow.

There was some very good acting, a little overdone, perhaps, but that made it all the easier to follow.

Some turns included really first-class Russian solo dancing, a dance I would never grow weary of watching. A national dance by a girl and a young fellow was first rate, and they were accorded three encores.

The show ended at 12 p.m., and we then went into the "Club" (?) house for some supper.

The orchestra, which was a Rumanian one, commenced to play on a stage. A floor, which at one time may have been a dance floor, was cleared and soon many couples were valsing. The Russian valse is exactly like the old English valse, only quicker.

The Boston or hesitation valse was, of course, unheard of.

A Russian dance, something like the mazurka, followed, and the Russian gallants with spurs fairly outdid themselves, as they had to let go of their partners, take three steps, stamp, and then click their heels together before embracing their partners again.

Meanwhile, the ladies did a turn with hands on hips, a bow when the click of the spurs took place, and they allowed themselves to be embraced.

When done well, this dance is very graceful and pleasing, but with clodhoppers for gallant cavaliers and buxom wenches in place of dainty fairies, the effect produced was a scream. However, they looked extremely pleased with themselves, the on-

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lookers looked pleased, and we certainly did, as we were red in the face with compressed mirth.

In between the dances the couples fell into a queue, and round and round they strolled, giggling and bowing to acquaintances.

Of course, hand-shaking was never ending, and in many cases I am sure young bloods boldly shook hands with ladies with whom they were not acquainted, but what's the odds, the ladies were not offended, in fact "were tickled to death over it," as the Americans say.

June 14th.—Got up at eight o'clock. China boy expressed his inability to light the fire, and Arront was *non est*. China boy stated Arront was ill. I thought at the time it was "Arront nonsense," but discovered later that he was sick of a fever.

Gave him some fever mixture and told him to take a day off.

W. and I have decided that China boy must go. It is obvious that his game is to convince us he is useless in order that we should give him the push.

The silly fool, we realised his uselessness ages ago, but kept him hoping he would be willing to learn, but it is not the case. Of course, he wants a job with officers who travel, so that he can buy vodka at places where it is cheap and sell it at an enormous profit at places where it is unobtainable. All the sweet Chinks do this, and they have a society who manage this business, and doubtless the directing manager has told our Chink that he is wasting the firm's time working for us, and therefore China boy must get away.

If he asked to go he would have to go East, as his passport does not permit him to remain up this way, but if we discharge him it is possible for him to remain West, in addition to which we pay "exes," having brought poor Chink so far from home. Chink therefore does nothing, and cheerfully with a smile tells us at meal times, no fire, no bread, no butter, no anything, and when asked why not, shakes his head and says he doesn't understand what we say. Of course he has us cold each time, literally so when there's no fire, so there's nothing to do but to curse roundly in English and steel ourselves to parting with China boy.

China boys *can* be first-rate servants, but only when it suits their book to be so.

Got along with the work nicely this morning. Had a Russian lesson, and felt time had not been wasted.

W. had some fun with Rudenoff this morning. It appears W. wished to discover what the record for the consumption of coal was, and with this object in view carted off Rudenoff to

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the loco. shed, explaining *en route* that he required a record of the consumption of coal. "Yes, I know, I understand, yes, yes, record of coal, I know," said Rudenoff, with a knowing nod of his head.

On reaching the shed, Rudenoff put a question to the ancient and venerable loco. foreman. The man showed considerable surprise at the question, and looked in a pitying way at W.

He took off his cap and scratched his old grey pate, and muttered to himself for several minutes. Finally he volunteered the required information, which was duly translated by Rudenoff. It appeared that the ancient one had been working in that shed for the last seventeen years, and taking into consideration the alteration of things since the Revolution, he was of the opinion that an engine driver of the name of Nicholas Carlovitch in the year 1904 burnt three-quarters of a ton more coal than any other locomotive driver had ever done before or since, and therefore he considered that this same Nicholas Carlovitch held the record for the consumption of coal.

Rudenoff won, and poor W. legged it back to the house and poured out his tale of woe to me. I fully sympathised with W. I remembered that a rule had twelve inches.

In the evening had tea with the E.'s. Mrs. E. produced some very interesting mementoes of her past days, when she lived at the Royal Palace, Petrograd, in the capacity of Maid of Honour to the Czarina. I was shown some beautiful inlaid boxes with the royal crest worked in stones, also gold medallions commemorating the death of different royalties, and mementoes of great occasions which were issued to a few great persons outside the royal household.

Seeing these Royal gifts made one realise the come-down in the world of the recipients of such Royal favours.

Perhaps one day when the present mess is cleared up, people such as the E.'s will come back into their own.

Thousands of the best blood of Russia are now pigging it in hovels in a dreadful way, or living in wagons if they are lucky enough to have influential male escorts with them.

All are hoping that they will be able to return to what the Bolsheviks have left of their estates and mansions. Many refugees managed to carry away with them some beautiful frocks and hats, and it is an extraordinary thing to see a pretty and fashionably dressed girl walk out of a hovel or a dirty wagon where she has probably lived along with two, or perhaps three, other families for months.

June 15th.—The Hun was better this morning, and made up for lost time by having a field day washing clothes.

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He was tolerably successful in his endeavours, but he used my one and only nail brush to scrub the clothes with.

I don't know what possessed him to be so stupid as by the time he had finished three weak-looking hairs remained in the brush. He apparently wore my brush to a standstill and then seized upon W.'s and reduced it to the same unsatisfactory state.

We have now no nail brush. I called the Hun up and showed him his handiwork, and he replied that it certainly was a tough job scrubbing clothes with a nail brush, but in spite of such a handicap he had managed to clean the clothes fairly well.

I then proceeded to tell him what I thought of him, and I think he was more flattened than flattered in consequence, by the time I had finished.

Some kind friend learning about our miserable domestic troubles volunteered to produce a woman to cook and look after us. We expressed our gratitude, and made up our minds to give China boy the push.

The woman turned up next morning, and soon knocked things into shape. The Hun was soon on his knees with a bucket of hot water and a floor cloth, making the floor look spotless. It had never struck us to utilise the Hun thus, and we complimented the woman on her brain wave.

Meanwhile she got the Chink going splendidly. One could not see him for dust and little stones, chopping wood. After he had finished this job to the entire satisfaction of the housekeeper, she put him on to washing everything within sight, and W. and I chuckled to see dear China boy winding up his term of office by doing a spot of really good work.

June 20th.—China boy has gone. We got him off on the one and only passenger train. It was a tough job getting him away, as he had to be pushed into an already overcrowded "tiploska" or wagon.

Household in good working order. First-rate meals, lots of crockery, and everything comfortable. The housekeeper and Arront get along well together, and both work hard.

I have received orders to go up and inspect Chilibinsk. My section runs from Petropovolask to Chilibinsk, with headquarters at Kurgan. I have been given a carriage to do my travelling in.

Work at Kurgan going on well, and troop trains are coming up in numbers.

A lot of the New Army are drilling daily on the squares of Kurgan.

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They have no uniform at all, but do their drill in the rags they come in with from the country.

The vast majority have no boots to speak of, and are in a filthy and miserable condition, and together with being underfed, are next to useless as soldiers.

In this state, the majority with a week or two's training, are entrained up to the front, where they are served out with rifles.

Many, in fact the majority of these men have had no training in shooting or the handling of arms. Little wonder, therefore, that they go *en masse* over to the Bolsheviks on arrival at the front, or as an alternative turn tail and run for dear life on hearing a shot fired in anger.

Even the men who have been fitted out with good serviceable kit, and have been trained by British officers, are of no use at the front, as they are sent under new and untrained Russian officers in whom the men have no confidence. Many are the times I have been told that these selfsame men who prove to be unreliable and useless in action under Russian officers of the New Siberian Army, would be really useful and plucky men with British officers or officers they could trust to lead them.

The men themselves have told this to officers who have trained them. The best trained troops in the world could not be expected to make any show of it at all under the conditions in which the men of the New Siberian Army are expected to fight.

At the front, the one thing which strikes everyone who has been in the Army area at all is the fact that men are plentiful, officers exceedingly scarce ; yet every public garden and place of entertainment from Vladivostock to the front are crammed to suffocation with officers. I have asked many Russian officers who have been " through it " the reason for this state of affairs, and they are unable to give any reason other than that the majority of officers one sees in thousands are unfit to assume command of troops. Then why make them officers ? I have asked, and the answer has been : " To complete the Cadre." A certain percentage of the Conscript Army must be officers, and the authorities have made the best selection from amongst the conscripts.

These officers have been through no training at all, and are wrapped in a fog of ignorance in all matters pertaining to tactics and military matters in general.

The old regular Russian officer knows his job, but cannot handle the New Army men, who they say are useless ; but they agree that if from the start they had the training of these same

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men, and knew them, they would take the men into action with confidence.

June 24th.—Left last night for Chilibinsk.

There is a French battalion here—the first one I have seen in Russia—and apparently, like ourselves, have only one battalion.

The officers are top-hole, as usual, and many of them speak English; the Commandant does so fluently.

Went with Major N. and interviewed the authorities regarding the situation. Things are at sixes and sevens. No one appears to know anything save that the Red Army are advancing and the Russian Army are falling back rapidly.

June 25th.—Went down to the big lake for a bathe. Many people bathing. No bathing costume is used in Siberia and parts of Russia. People of both sexes bathe alongside each other, and no one ever wears a costume.

If a costume is worn it attracts attention, whereas without a costume one is one of a crowd, and treated accordingly.

I had heard that this lack of bathing costumes was in vogue in Russia, but didn't believe it until I saw that it was so with my own eyes.

After one has got accustomed to seeing people strolling to and from the water in the nude, I must say that the first shock soon wears off, and no further thought is given to the subject, unless something extra comical presents itself, and in such cases it is the same, whether clothed or unclothed; the comical object would attract the eye.

Had lunch with the French, and in the evening went up to the American Red Cross Hospital and had tea there.

A charming lot of nurses, Americans and Russians. The Americans were very pleased to see us, and said, "Why, you're British boys, eh? Come right in." We went right in, and had a very pleasant evening, promising when we left to look in next day.

June 26th.—Bolsheviks advancing rapidly. The question of evacuating Chilibinsk under consideration. In the afternoon went for a delightful ride round the lake on horses furnished by the French. We rode through several Cossack villages. We dismounted in one village, and the Cossacks swarmed round us. We had our cameras with us, and they requested us to take photographs of their families, saying they would pay us any sum we liked to ask if we would do so. We expressed our regret that, owing to a scarcity of films, we could not comply with their request, but said we would take a big family group.

The men lined up and drew their curved Cossack swords,

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and the women and children flocked round them. We took two or three interesting snapshots, and then inspected the Cossack "stables," which were situated under the trees.

The Siberian Cossack ponies are small, but very strong and wiry, and capable of enduring great hardships.

One General says that evacuation must be put in hand at once, and another General says that there is no hurry.

We went to see a third, who apparently is the senior, and he does not know quite what to do, but states that he thinks that Chilibinsk will have to be evacuated.

He has drawn up a programme.

Heard on reliable authority that Chilibinsk would not be evacuated. As we had guaranteed to evacuate the American Red Cross we told them that they needn't get scared, but at the same time we did not rely on the information received being correct, and that being the case they should not unload the large number of wagons containing Red Cross stuff which had arrived at Chilibinsk, until they heard further from us.

July 7th.—The officer in charge of the American Red Cross came over to our car this morning, and stated that the Russian authorities had ordered them to unload and release the wagons containing Red Cross stuff, and he wanted our advice as to what to do.

We told him he had better hang on to the wagons, or, better still, send them all down the line, as we were strongly of the opinion that the Bolsheviks would take Chilibinsk.

They acted on this advice, and moreover commenced to pack up the enormous amount of stuff which was in warehouses and in the hospital, as when the orders for evacuation did come, there would be such a panic and scramble that no cars would be available, and it would be a case of everyone for himself, and the devil take the hindmost.

Information has been received from high authorities that the Bolsheviks have retreated and that Chilibinsk is safe, in spite of the fact that we saw the station yard and sidings thronged with Russian officers and their families busy getting their kit and belongings into wagons.

The Russian Evacuation Officer stated that the American Red Cross and the wounded would be sent away first in the event of evacuation taking place. However, we are in a position to know that there are not enough wagons to go round, and that the whole hospital cannot be cleared unless wagons are reserved for this purpose.

At tea-time the American officer in charge was of the opinion that all was serene ; where he got this information from, and

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who convinced him that such was the case, I do not know, and for the time being we left it at that, since we also had been told by different brass hats that evacuation would not take place for some days at least.

At eleven o'clock at night, as we were passing the French echelon, we looked in to say good night to the French Commandant, who we could see was sitting reading.

The first thing he told us was that orders of evacuation were out and that the French would be leaving next day.

We at once informed the American Red Cross authorities of this, and told them there was no need to get the wind up, as we would see them safely away.

I was ordered by Major N. who was in charge of six British officers and four N.C.O.'s at Chiliabinsk, to get back to Kurgan and tackle the work there and keep the traffic going.

July 8th.—Left for Kurgan with some of the Americans. They had some twenty wagons of stuff with them intended for distribution to the Russian refugees, and they wished to unload and keep this stuff at Kurgan with the object of railing it up to Chiliabinsk when it was recaptured.

I informed them that Kurgan would fall, and that it was useless unloading the stuff there as, when it came to evacuating Kurgan, in all probability wagons would not be available.

However, their orders were to unload the stuff, so they started on the job.

July 9th.—The American Red Cross trains came through, and others on their way down. Things at Kurgan chaos—no one knows what to do—like lost sheep having no shepherd. Busy all day pushing refugees through on their way East. Thousands flooding the stations, and the roads are thronged with horse-conveyances of all descriptions and people slogging along on foot getting away from the advancing Bolsheviks.

In the evening took a walk up to the gardens to get a spell away from the dust and racket.

Gardens full of light-hearted officers ogling the girls—as if they had not a care in the world. Why are they not at the Front? Orchestra playing good selections of English music; it is a Rumanian orchestra.

Met old General C. in the gardens. Had a stroll round with him. Very difficult to discuss war situation in Russian, but both agreed that the situation was rotten.

July 10th.—Nos. 1 and 2 Echelons with the French passed through Kurgan. Also an American Red Cross train. The Americans could not evacuate all the wounded, owing to there being no wagons. The Russian authorities undertook to

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evacuate the remainder. I wonder what has happened to them. I saw a large number of wounded just brought in from the Front. They were in a terrible state. There is no first field dressing to speak of at the Front, and usually the wounded have to be sent back a long way by train before they get any attention at all.

Other troops coming up see all this, and it does not tend to better their poor morale.

The American Red Cross and very many Russian officers have told me that over 50 per cent. of the wounds in the hands of wounded soldiers are self-inflicted. I have seen trainloads of wounded, and as much as 75 per cent. have wounds in the left hand. The authorities say they will refuse to admit to hospital men with self-inflicted wounds. Some men have wounds in the foot. Many are said to be self-inflicted, and it is an accepted fact that the number of cases of self-inflicted wounds is disgraceful.

We saw a battalion of troops come up to the Front the other day, and to-day we hear that they walked *en masse* over to the Bolsheviks. Daily whole companies walk over and join the Bolsheviks. These men are conscripted from villages which do not know what Bolshevism means; they know that the Bolsheviks are advancing, and as a safeguard, therefore, the men join the Bolsheviks, so that when the Reds arrive at their respective villages, no pillaging takes place. Besides which, the Bolsheviks pay their soldiers infinitely better than the Russian Army do, and in addition to which heavy sums are paid proportionately to officers and men whenever a town is taken—every town having its price.

July 11th.—When I returned to Kurgan I found that the Hun and the woman were both in hospital with typhus, and W. feeding at the station.

The same miserable state of affairs as before, cooking our own breakfast. We are trying to get another factotum.

The remaining two French echelons and one American train passed through to-day, together with a large number of refugee trains. The roads still thronged.

People in Kurgan have got the wind up as evacuation has been ordered.

The Czecho-Slovaks are preparing to leave, and this adds to the "wind up" considerably.

There are about 1,000 Czechs in Kurgan. Some time back they came up from the east, where they wiped the floor with Bolsheviks at different stations, and then tried to pass through Kurgan on their way home to their own country.

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Kurgan was at that time in the hands of the Bolsheviks, who stopped the Czech train and stated that they had orders to disarm all Czech troops before passing them through the Bolshevik lines.

The Czechs had been fighting the Bolsheviks since the time the Reds prevented them from returning to Austro-Hungary.

It's a long story as to how the Czechs came to be on the Siberian front, but they are still here as the Bolsheviks refuse to let them return home unless they disarmed them first. The Czechs at Kurgan refused to allow themselves to be disarmed, and the Bolsheviks gave them till the following morning to consider the matter.

That night the Czechs got busy with their machine guns, which they had on the train with them, and very quickly were in possession of Kurgan. They laid out the Bolsheviks and ruled the town, which they eventually handed over to the Russians.

The Czechs are the only troops in Kurgan people have any faith in, as Kurgan is Bolshevik to the backbone, and the troops and people of Kurgan who are not refugees are only awaiting their opportunity to rise and retake the town. They have made one or two attempts, but the Czechs have soon settled them by shooting all suspects.

Now that the Czechs are leaving, the refugee population are in a panic, and want to get away. We have only four British officers and five N.C.O.'s here, and the Czechs advised us to clear out when they do.

July 12th.—Refugees still pouring through. Cheliabinsk has been taken by the Bolsheviks. All these Russian towns are full of pro-Bolshevik people and troops, and when the Red Army are on the eve of taking a town, the local Bolsheviks rise and endeavour to take the town, and then go out and meet the advancing Red Army.

Some time back two of my chief Russian clerks at the station were arrested one morning, as they turned out to be Bolshevik spies.

The railway staff, including engine drivers and the locomotive shopworkers are one and all Bolsheviks.

There was a battalion of Serbians stationed at Cheliabinsk, and they were on the point of marching out of the town, prior to its falling into the hands of the Bolsheviks, when the local Bolshevik troops and the locomotive shopmen rose and endeavoured to take the town.

One hundred and fifty Serbs were killed in the fighting, including the battalion commander and eight officers.

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The Serbs saw red ; they shot and killed every Bolshevik they came in contact with, and then marched eastwards as the Red Army from the west entered the town.

Very many people we knew were killed during the local rising.

Major N., with the remaining Americans and British, passed through Kurgan on their way to Omsk.

The Czechs are leaving to-morrow.

As there is grave danger of a local Bolshevik rising, I am arranging to send away all the British, and also Mrs. and Miss E., as we promised we would see that they got safely away.

All the British left Kurgan this morning, including the E.'s.

Colonel S., who is doing duty as liaison officer, is expected through from Cheliabinsk, and I am remaining and will be picked up by him on his way through East.

All Czechs have left, and everyone expects some local rising.

I went to the gardens in the evening.

Cossack patrols everywhere, and everyone in the gardens has to show papers of identification. I was not questioned at all, as the British uniform is recognised by all.

No one to talk to, and not a single English-speaking person in Kurgan save myself, as my interpreter refused to stay behind with me when the others left. Bright specimen !

Got back home at about eleven o'clock, sentries everywhere. One suddenly jumped out of a doorway and shouted for me to halt, at the same time bringing his rifle to the aim.

I told him I was an English officer, and he allowed me to pass. The animals they put on as sentries are simply village buffoons, who know nothing and cannot read or write, and many times I have been requested by Russian officers to get them past sentries who, apparently recognising a British uniform allow British officers to pass, but not recognising the rank of Russian officers refuse to allow them to pass. I really don't wonder at sentries not recognising Russian uniforms ; they are varied and wonderful.

The sentries are dangerous, insomuch as they are unaccustomed to firearms, and it is quite on the cards that their rifle " goes off " by accident, and, such being the case, it is always advisable to comply smartly with a buffoon sentry's orders, as with any ordinary one.

Colonel S. arrived, and I entrained, and we left for Omsk. A rising, but a very small one, was attempted the day we left, but a little shooting on the part of the Cossacks soon settled the affair.

I got off at Petropavlovsk, where the other British officers

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and N.C.O.'s were, and Colonel S. went on to Omsk to see the General.

On the journey down the roads for miles and miles were thronged with an endless stream of droskies and other horse-drawn vehicles, piled up with household goods and chattels. Petropovolask is quite a small town, but has a large public garden where a very fine orchestra plays every evening. There are about thirty musicians and the music is of a high class, the instruments being stringed ones.

Gardens full of people, the majority of the male sex being in some sort of uniform.

There is a large café arrangement in the garden where supper and liqueurs can be obtained, and also two houses where cards and games of chance can be indulged in.

A large number of Tartars dressed in extraordinary costumes, looking very picturesque and quaint in their national dress, and the small pillbox cap and veil which the women wear, are amongst the crowd.

The French battalion from Chiliabinsk were at Petropovolask, living in their wagons and cars, and the officers paid frequent visits to the garden adjoining the house used by the British Mission as a mess.

Time was very dull waiting for orders as to what was going to happen, as, if the Red Guard advance much further there will be no railway left for the British to operate, and a total withdrawal from this front will be the result.

On August 5th Colonel S. returned from Omsk in charge of the section in place of Major N., and made arrangements to scatter the officers and men along the line.

I got orders to return to Kurgan and operate between there and the front.

Chiliabinsk having fallen, the Bolshevik Army is now between that place and Kurgan, advancing rapidly, with very little resistance offered.

Troops are being entrained up to the front by the trainload, but just as many are returning, together with guns which have never been fired. The refugees are thronging the roads in thousands, and every kind of vehicle is commandeered by the military authorities for the purpose of evacuation of towns.

After going up the line to the front and seeing what was wanted and what was doing, I returned to Kurgan, and at once commenced the evacuation of Government factories, machinery and stores.

The work was difficult, as wagons were very scarce indeed and labour also scarce. The remaining British who had come

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up from Petropovolask, with the exception of Colonel S. and his two officers and myself, with one subaltern and two N.C.O.'s, left Kurgan.

My party worked away hard in getting the required stuff loaded up and getting women and children with the factory hands away in wagons.

All the droskies and other vehicles drawn by horses had been brought in from the surrounding villages by the military authorities, and were utilised to clear the people from the town.

On August 10th, Colonel S., with his train, left Kurgan, instructing me to leave when my work was finished.

On August 11th I received telegraphic orders to leave Kurgan that night, as the Bolsheviks were close to the town and were trying an enveloping movement.

I was instructed to see the G.O. Commanding and verify the information received, which I did, and the Russian G.O.C. stated that he and his staff were leaving that night, and that we should leave with him.

I had only a few wagons left to load ; all the staff and the women and children were safely away.

We got the wagons after a lot of trouble, as engines were scarce, and finished the job by the afternoon, and cleared all the wagons and other trains containing material from the local shops out of Kurgan.

Three miles east of Kurgan is a river spanned by a big iron bridge, and it was feared that the local Bolsheviks would rush the bridge and blow it up, thus effectively cutting off our retreat. I had been living by myself on the outskirts of the town in a house lent me by a British firm, but as the situation had become more dangerous the authorities advised me to take my things to the station at once and join up with my party and the G.O.C. and his staff. The last train was got ready, and the retreating army straggled into Kurgan that night. Early next morning we left Kurgan and passed through the barbed wire entanglements, such as they were, and got over the bridge, which, of course, was strongly guarded. We halted on the other side of the river for six hours, and I took the opportunity of examining the defences. The least said about them and the general organisation the better. The situation seemed excellent if the troops under the G.O.C. could be relied upon, but, as he frankly admitted, he was very doubtful about their loyalty, and, in fact, did not know which of his regiments were Bolsheviks. He was prepared for treachery by having Siberian Cossack regiments posted in advantageous places.

The Cossacks are fairly loyal when it comes to defending

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their own homes, and the Red Army are now nearing the Cossack country.

Before charging the Bolsheviks raise an ear-splitting yell. On one occasion they merely yelled without charging, and the Siberian Army did not stop running for twenty-five versts.

A verst is about two-thirds of a mile.

The train went on from Kurgan, and we passed endless streams of vehicles moving eastwards from Kurgan. They were so close together that the horses drawing the vehicles almost rested their tired heads on the vehicles immediately in front.

This endless stream could be seen winding along from horizon to horizon, and we passed it all day.

There were bullocks drawing carts, herds of cattle and ponies, and hairy camels which belched their disgust at the state of affairs in general as they shuffled along.

Next morning we arrived once more at Petropovlask, and learnt that Kurgan had fallen; the Red Army, consisting of Bolsheviks, Chinese and Internationals had crossed the river and were advancing eastwards along the line unchecked.

It seemed certain that all the towns as far as Omsk would have to be evacuated, and I was sent down the line to inspect towns and factories and see what stuff would have to be evacuated and what number of wagons would be required for this work.

I accordingly, with my party, entrained in a carriage placed at our disposal, and went down the line.

The first station had some fifty wagon loads of wheat and flour to get away, and after inspecting the warehouses we went on to the next station, where about a similar quantity of food-stuffs would have to be evacuated.

The woods round the small stations were very inviting, and as the train was not going to leave for a few hours, I took a walk through them.

I found the railway workpeople good chaps, and got on very well with them.

I had been gone about half an hour when I heard revolver shots.

I wondered what was up, and turned towards the line. I then saw our train coming round a curve in the distance.

I legged it like smoke towards the line, and the driver to whom I had given cigarettes and had photographed his engine waved to me and signalled he would slow up.

They had all been on the lookout for me, and one of my

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party had tried to attract my attention by loosing off with his revolver.

I boarded the train and went on to Issul-Kul, where we arrived at night.

Next morning I inspected different factories and warehouses and ammunition dumps, and commenced evacuating ammunition in the shape of rifles, small ammunition and shells.

Altogether we cleared some ninety wagons of ammunition and bombs, and about 200 wagons of foodstuffs.

The Bolsheviks are advancing rapidly, and are within some twenty or thirty versts of Petropovolask. All round this town are Cossack towns and villages, and the Cossacks are determined that the Reds shall not set foot in their territory.

A plan of campaign has been drawn up to try and hold up the Red Army at Petropovolask, and a British officer attached to the Russian General Staff showed me what the plan was.

He had done a trip over Kurgan with a French aviator, and had spotted the Reds' positions.

The plan was a complete success, and the Bolsheviks were thrown back.

The evacuation has stopped at Petropovolask and Issul-Kul, as our Army is advancing rapidly on the heels of the thoroughly discomfited Reds.

It is impossible these days to write up this diary every day, but I manage to scribble a few lines in my note book, which enables me to put things down in their proper sequence.

I am leaving for Petropovolask to-morrow to see the Colonel, as he has received orders to go to England.

Only officers and men who have volunteered to remain out through the winter are to be kept on with the Mission. The others are going home.

Colonel J. has orders to come up and take over from Colonel S.

Arrived at Petropovolask to-day and saw Colonel J. Colonel S. and staff left—good luck to them. Colonel J. wishes me to get back to Issul-Kul and look after matters there.

Will leave here to-morrow night. Am still to do evacuation work.

Our Army still advancing rapidly. Fresh troops have been thrown into the line, and things look very bright. Not much damage has been done to towns and railway stations occupied by the Reds, but the people seem delighted to see the White troops back once more.

Arrived at Issul-Kul. Since evacuation has stopped not

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much work in that direction, but enough to do on my section getting the trains through.

More officers leaving for England. A very few will be left to do the work. I have volunteered to remain on.

More towns and railways falling into our hands as our Army advances. Our front will soon be at Kurgan, where the Reds are expected to make a stand on the banks of the river.

Finished evacuating everywhere, and things are getting shipshape.

Arrived at Issul-Kul this morning. Business is normal, and trains running more or less regularly—but are often hours late, so when I say they are running regularly, I mean that they start from commencing stations and run over the section to open timings.

September 22nd.—Snow fell this morning (weather suddenly turned cold), but all thawed very quickly, and now nothing but liquid mud.

These Siberian towns are horribly dusty in summer, as there is always a wind blowing, and one gets absolutely black in a very short time in the street, and when a little rain descends, the dust, which is ankle deep, turns to liquid mud and makes it absolutely impossible to get about the towns and villages unless one is prepared literally to trudge through sticky clay, which reaches over the tops of one's boots.

Nothing much doing at Issul-Kul, and we are living in railway carriages ; as our cars are too cold to weather the winter in, we must get busy and get double windows put in and otherwise fit up the cars to withstand the winter.

Colonel J. has left, and a Major C. has taken his place, and has left for the front. I wonder when my turn will come to get Front Section again.

The woods look very pretty indeed.

I and some of my party took a trip down the line. Lovely woods and steppes. All the trees are now bare, and the country already begins to look bleak.

I have wired to C. and told him my car is too cold to live in now, and my party must move into more suitable accommodation.

Received a wire to proceed back to Omsk and do the necessary alterations to my car.

September 29th.—Left for Omsk. It will take us about thirty-six hours to get there.

September 30th.—Arrived at Omsk and saw the General this morning. He wishes me to remain in Omsk for a few days.

The car cannot be put in order for a few days, so must remain here.

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I took six rolls of films to be developed of different things I had snapped up the line. I hope they turn out all right. My camera is a good one, and has not let me down up to now, so I think the results will be good.

October 1st.—Drove out in the General's car to the American Hospital, which is about five to seven versts out of Omsk. I saw Major N. there, who is recovering from typhus ; several people have recently died from this disease.

A tooth has been making itself in evidence, so seized the opportunity to have it seen to. The American doctor directed me to the dentist's room, and on entering, found the dentist to be a young girl.

A very large percentage of the dentists in Russia are women. The fairy who tackled me certainly knew her job, and I felt I had full confidence in her. It was difficult explaining dental technicalities to her, as she was a Russian, but she nodded and smiled, and finished the stopping in great style.

October 2nd.—Got orders from the General to take charge of No. 10 division, and also got a step in the right direction in the way of promotion.

Am leaving to-morrow, as it is urgent that I take over at once. I have not been in Omsk since I went to Kurgan, so had a good time with all my pals, whom I had not seen for some months.

October 3rd.—Am on the way to Petropovolask, expect to reach there day after to-morrow ; nothing very exciting on the journey has occurred so far.

October 5th.—Arrived at Petropovolask and found that Major C. is at the front. Have sent up word for him to return at once and make over charge, as he has got to leave for Vladivostock.

October 6th.—Spent in mapping out plans for the future, and posting out my officers and men. The Reds are still retreating and have now been driven beyond the Tabolsk, and are "digging themselves in" on the opposite bank of the river.

October 7th.—Major C. returned and handed over charge to-day. Am proceeding to-morrow back to Issul-Kul to pick up some of my party who are living in two rooms of a house.

October 8th. On the way back to Issul-Kul—hope to reach there to-night with luck. The railway is very congested owing to want of system and due to contradictory orders being issued.

Young Russian officers in charge of echelons appear to be under the impression that they are empowered to issue any order they think fit in connection with their train.

On arrival of trains at a station, these young bloods stride into the Station Master's office and order cars to be attached

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or detached, and inform the S.M. as to when their train must go and how long it must stop at a station ; and when the railway official remonstrates with these pompous little upstarts, they promptly threaten to put the Station Master under arrest.

Whenever the Station Master has complained to me of such unwarranted interference on the part of echelon commanders in matters in which they have no right to interfere, it has given me much pleasure to rid the Station Master's office of these young cocks, informing them that their echelon would be dealt with in the way which best suited the convenience of the railway authorities, and moreover, if they repeated any more threats to railway officials the results would be far more unpleasant for the threatener than the threatened. Thank goodness we have power in such matters, and can protect the Russian railway official from the all-domineering and offensive Russian military officer.

This class of young cock officer was a country lout a short time ago, and his one idea of showing that he is an officer is to bluster and bully all those he thinks he can with impunity—he quickly realises, however, those he cannot.

I really don't wonder at N.C.O.'s and civilians having no affection for the majority of " officers," and although ' I says it as shouldn't,' the B.O. leaves the Russian officer standing in every way, and the gentler sex are very quick to notice and appreciate the difference.

October 9th.—Arrived at Issul-Kul and picked up the rest of my party. The authorities at Issul-Kul very glad to see us back again, and sorry to hear we are leaving. We went to the gardens in the evening—a little tired after a big day—where there was a show on. We were not allowed to purchase tickets, but were conducted to the front seats on arrival. This is invariably the courteous treatment one receives at the hands of the different Russian Commandants and authorities, but they are of the old school—a pity the temporary officers cannot follow good examples.

The show was quite good—everyone feeling cheery as the news from the Front is good. The last time we were in this theatre there was not a show on—but some enterprising youths with concertinas played dance music and charged five roubles entrance fees to all comers—ladies being admitted free. The belles of the town turned up. We paid our five roubles to watch the fun. We had no wish to attempt to dance—and so we watched the belles and their beaux doing all kinds of weird steps. Our knowledge of the jazz and foxtrot fresh from the

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London dance-rooms stood us in poor stead in the event of our wanting to take the floor.

One young Cossack, in a wonderful furry busby and long coat with fancy top-boots and spurs, and girdled about the waist by a fancy belt, suspended to which was a richly worked sabre—stood out alone.

He, unfortunately, fancied his chance too much. Never have I seen such a conceited young cock ; he simply walked up to a village wench, and with a condescending grin grabbed her wrist and jerked her to her feet.

The wench giggling and simpering with delight at so magnificent a creature taking notice of her, took the floor, and really the dance, which was a cross between a double Highland schottische and corners in the Lancers, was well worth watching. The show was worth any amount of money—no brain could conceive the staging of anything so absolutely novel and truly interesting, and at the same time shriekingly funny.

CHAPTER IV

THE RETREAT OF THE WHITE ARMY

October 10th.—We left Issul-Kul for the Front. I have received orders to photograph a bridge which the Reds have blown up—as the authorities want to know the extent of the damage, and are unable themselves to obtain a photograph. The traffic is so congested that I expect it will take us three or four days before we reach the farthest station to which the railway runs before reaching the armoured trains and front line.

October 11th.—Arrived at Petropovolask, but am going straight through this station, which is only headquarters. None of us have any drinks. We never do get stuff up the line.

We were at Kurgan for three and a half months and we could not get provisions up or get hold of drinks, and smoked foul Japanese cigarettes called "Golden Helmet." They nearly put the "tin hat" on us at times. Heaps of all kinds of drinks and smokes and canned provisions at Omsk, but everything appears to have taken root there.

Very occasionally indeed a jar of rum or a bottle of whiskey has sneaked through the barrage of officers down the line and was made short work of by us when we got to grips with them. Lately things have been much better, and we have been able to get hold of some cigarettes and jam. We left Petropovolask in the evening, and are now making fairly good time towards the Front.

October 12th.—Arrived at Lebedyja, where the General Staff of the 2nd Army are situated. I went to look up two British officers who were acting as liaison officers with the Russian Staff.

I was introduced to the C.O. of the 10th Aviation Division, and he wrote out an order to the second in command, who was up at the Front, to take me up over the lines.

We only stopped two hours in Lebedyja, and I was introduced to the G.O.C. 2nd Army.

He spoke English, and asked me to wire to Omsk for certain requisites, and also asked me to give him copies of photographs which I proposed to take of the broken bridge.

The G.O.C. was also kind enough to give me a letter instructing all officers at the Front to give me all assistance I might

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require, and at the same time giving me permission to go anywhere along the Front line I wished to.

October 13th.—Arrived at Vargushi, which is the last station the railway runs to.

Was asked out to supper by the 10th Aviation Division. Jolly good fellows, and all toasted to the British Mission. As I was the only member present, I was compelled to reply to the numerous toasts. Some of the officers present had served with General D.'s Army, and great were the tales they told of the work of the British serving on that Front.

Arrangements were made for me to fly over the Bolshevik lines next morning, and after another shot at the vodka bottle the party broke up.

October 14th.—Had breakfast at 8 a.m., and then went over to the aerodrome and tested the aero-camera, which I intended using to photograph the bridge. Having seen to this, I next fired a few shots from the machine gun attached to the Sopwith 'plane, and found it to be in good working order.

We put a few spare drums on board, and then waited for my pilot to turn up.

To while away the time we stuck up a tin and practised revolver shooting.

The little automatics used by the Russian officers bored small holes in the tin, and my .450 shots plainly showed up in the tin by the considerably larger punctures, and I think the competitors would have willingly swopped weapons, judging by the comments passed after inspecting my "gun."

The pilot turned up at 9.30, and we got into flying kit. The weather was cloudy and the wind erratic when we left at ten o'clock. Within fifteen minutes we sighted the bridge from a height of 1,500 metres, and descended to 600 in order to get a better view of it.

We circled round and then swooped, and I took three snaps by standing up with the camera strapped to me. The Reds let loose at us, but were poor shots, as they had no anti-aircraft guns, and the six-pounders did not rise to the occasion.

We then flew along the lines, and afterwards turned and flew 20 versts beyond, taking villages which were not too much out of our way in order to find out which were occupied by Red and which by our troops.

The pilot appeared to know when we were fired at, but to me it appeared as if the usual artillery duel was in progress as the shrapnel burst in any old place.

After a good look round we returned to the 'drome, and I went with the photographer to the dark room to develop the

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negatives. Only one photo was clear enough, the other two did not show the breaks in the bridge, but showed that the whole centre of the bridge was intact.

October 15th.—Had some more tries to photograph the bridge, but in each case the detail of the damage was not clear enough, and clouds would come over the sun just as we were passing the bridge.

The plane, which to commence with was plugged three times, has now twelve red stars on it, denoting "honourable wounds."

As we were going up to the Front, I resolved to photograph the bridge from close to, if it were possible, with my kodak.

An engine was going up to the armoured train, so we rode on that and, on reaching it, got on to a trolley and peddled our way for eight versts towards the front line.

A lively artillery duel was going on on our left, but the enemy were bursting their shrapnel too high to do much damage.

On going as far as we could by trolley, we got off and picked our way through the woods towards the Front line. We asked different groups of troops as to the whereabouts of the enemy, but they were singularly ignorant of the whereabouts of the Reds or anyone else.

We next spotted a forward observation officer concealed at the edge of the wood behind a small pile of hay, and we crept up and asked him whether it was possible to photograph the bridge, and whether villages adjacent to the bridge were occupied by Red or White troops. He was very uncertain indeed as to what the position was, and as the bridge was some two versts away, we decided to walk along under cover of the railway embankment towards the bridge.

As we passed a house, one corner was chipped off by a shell and a calf killed—it stopped a bit of shell in a tender part.

Also two pigeons lay toes upwards. They were unhurt, and had evidently died of shellshock. We took possession of them for further reference, and found later in the day that they went excellently with chipped potatoes.

We continued our way, and leaving the bridge on our right, walked across some fields to a village.

We approached the village cautiously and enquired from a small boy as to whether the village was in the hands of the Bolsheviks or White troops. Some old women edged away from us saying that we were in view of the Bolshevik outposts and that possibly we would be shot at, at the same time informing us that the village adjacent had that morning been occupied by White troops.

We entered the village without loss of time and enquired our

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way to the Staff Officer. On reaching that place we saw the Colonel Commanding the 11th Regiment, and showed him the letter given me by the General. He was astonished to learn that we had walked into the village across the fields, as the Bolshevik outposts had the fields under observation, and the Colonel said the Bolsheviks had some fifteen minutes ago commenced firing from the front trenches, and that undoubtedly my interpreter, who accompanied me, and myself were the targets for their fire.

He further told us we could not photograph the bridge from the village we were in, which was at right angles to the left bank of the river where the White troops front trenches were, as every bit of ground was covered by the enemy's fire.

The Reds then started shelling the village.

The Colonel told us we must remain until nightfall, and then he would provide horses, and under cover of darkness get back the way we came.

About eight o'clock at night the shelling of the village ceased, and we left, accompanied by two Cossack orderlies. A lively artillery duel was in progress, and the flash of the guns on both sides showed up clearly, and the shells played merry hell overhead.

We got back to railhead, and then, after getting on the right side of the pigeons and other fare, we settled down on a mound and watched the battle.

The Colonel in the village told us that he intended to take the bridge head, which was held on the right bank by the Reds, that night by assault. We'd had a heavy day of it, so turned in and left the guns to have it out.

October 16th.—Early after breakfast we went to see the O.C. Cossacks as we wished to ride out towards the front again.

The O.C. kindly provided two horses for myself and my interpreter, with two Cossacks as orderlies.

On passing through one wood we saw three mounted men.

We got ready to fire, but they turned out to be White Scouts. The woods were very dense, and many of the Red Mounted Scouts were, we knew, on our side of the river, and as both the Red and White troops were dressed absolutely alike it was impossible to discover friend from foe until interrogated.

The situation was ridiculous, but frequently I have seen batches of Red prisoners come in and have been unable to distinguish them from the White guards, save that the latter were armed.

Frequently the prisoners included Huns and Austrians, and these wore, many of them, the same uniforms as they had when

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they were captured on the Russian front as far back as 1914 and they were taken prisoners by the Russians and, when the Revolution broke out, some found themselves ranged on the side of the Reds and the others with the White troops. Those with the Reds were compelled to take up arms again and fight, and were, I think, in the majority of cases very glad to be taken prisoners.

Our escort of two were unable to tell us where the Reds were on the flanks, and on reaching the railway embankment I decided to leave our horses and escort in a hollow and walk up under cover of the embankment to the bridge, the left side of which was in our possession the night before, and we trusted that the condition of affairs was still the same.

We passed two rows of trenches which had been made by the Bolsheviks when they were making a stand on the left bank of the river. The barbed wire entanglements had been left standing, and were only destroyed in parts by artillery fire. In about half an hour we arrived at the bridgehead where our front line trenches were.

We learnt that the attempt to take the right bank bridgehead the previous night had failed, and the Bolsheviks were still in possession of it, and their front line trenches were along the opposite bank, some sixty yards away.

I explained to the sergeant that I wished to take a photograph of the broken bridge. The head of the bridge was only fifteen yards away from the front line trenches and dug-outs, which were situated behind the bank of the river.

On the top of the bank stood the house and outhouse which had been occupied by railway employees who guarded the entrance to the bridge.

The sergeant in charge took me round to the left of the bank, and we cautiously inspected the bridge. I selected the spot from which I wished to take the photograph. The house stood close to the damage, and a door standing open afforded cover from view. The men were ordered to line up and open up fire with rifles and machine guns, as the enemy could be seen some sixty yards away taking peeps over the top and letting loose at us.

As soon as rapid fire started from our side I took five snapshots, and then darted down the bank from the outhouse. No shots were fired from the enemy, as they were apparently busy wondering what the object of our rapid fire was.

The dug-outs were very shallow affairs and of not much use against heavy artillery fire, and altogether the front line was very thinly manned, the percentage of machine guns being very low.

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After thanking the sergeant and having a look at the enemy trenches from behind a tuft of grass on the top of our trenches, we picked our way back through the old barbed wire entanglements to where our ponies were waiting.

Although we crossed in the open in view of the Bolshevik trenches they did not fire at us, the reason being that we were too far away to be distinguished from peasants, who carry on their work in the usual way, as it is immaterial to them who are in occupation of their village, whether it is the Reds or White troops, and neither troops have any wish to injure the villagers, who are mildly curious only to wonder which party will occupy their village eventually.

The peasants being Russian, and both the Reds and White being ditto, the situation is unique, and non-combatants differ in sentiments in different villages as to which party they prefer to be servile to—very few of the villagers understand what the whole trouble is about and are easily led by propaganda work, and are perfectly safe in remaining in their villages except when the villages are actually shelled. Many villages have been taken, lost, and retaken by the White troops and the villagers appear to be the same after having been in the power of the Bolsheviks, and, of course, diplomatically tell the victorious troops that they are delighted to see them back again.

Many of the villages captured by the Red troops are compelled to provide recruits for the Bolshevik army, but as the White troops are mainly conscripts it comes to the same thing to the villagers ; whichever side is top dog, as far as a particular village is concerned, recruits are drawn from that village.

Wholesale desertions take place daily from both sides. All loyal officers should be on the side of the White troops. When I say loyal officers I mean the officers of the original pre-war Russian army.

Any such officers found with the Bolshevik army when taken prisoners are shot out of hand. Many of these old-time officers have unwillingly had to serve with the Red troops as they were unable to join the White army when the upheaval took place ; and many of them have escaped over to the White army when the opportunity has offered, and many of these officers and men have been shot on reaching the lines of the White troops without being given a hearing, as they were unable to give themselves up to competent authorities and fell into the hands of the White soldiery, who promptly shot all such men without delay.

Of course, some managed to report themselves to higher authorities when deserting from the Bolsheviks, and their services were accepted by the White troop commanders, and

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such officers were given opportunities to fight along with their old-time troops, but were always put to fight in the most dangerous places in case a mistake had been made in accepting their services.

We mounted our horses on arrival at the spot where we had left them, and rode back to the place where the armoured train was standing. There was a second armoured train about two versts behind the first one, and the second train had been in action the night before with the Bolshevik armoured train across the river, and the engine had received a direct hit from the enemy's guns.

We boarded the trains as we knew the officers in charge and had been with them in action, and had a drink of vodka in the machine gun truck, which was fitted up with sleeping accommodation, and also served as a mess for the officers.

It was getting dark, so, leaving our horses with the two Cossack orderlies, we got on to a hand trolley and worked our way back to the station, where our railway carriage was standing. A heavy artillery duel was in full progress, and the blast from the guns and the brighter flash as the shells burst lit up the sky.

We gave the Cossack orderlies some tobacco and cigarettes before leaving them.

One had an old revolver which he had "inherited" from a Bolshevik mounted scout the day previous.

Apparently whilst riding through the woods the Cossack saw a mounted man, who, on spotting the Cossack, leisurely turned his horse off to the right. The Cossack cantered up to the man, who suddenly produced a revolver and tried to use it, but it missed fire. The Cossack drew his sabre and cut the man in two with a slash through the top of the right shoulder, the blade passing out just below the left armpit.

Many such incidents occur, and time and again parties, on meeting each other, are prepared for immediate action until it is ascertained whether they are friends or foes.

October 18th.—We heard this morning that the Reds had broken through our lines in four places on both flanks, and that it would be necessary to evacuate Vargushi station.

The Railway Battalion and armoured trains are withdrawing to Lebedyja, and orders have been given for our car to be attached to one of the supply trains.

If the Reds intended a serious advance the situation will be as bad as it possibly can be for the White troops, as in anticipation of walking into Kurgan, which was a big place just across the river, all manner of supplies have been brought up and train loads of machinery, and in fact everything which had been

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evacuated from Kurgan and sent east of Omsk, a distance of over 1,000 miles, all has been brought back, and trains are standing ready to run into Kurgan as soon as the bridge over the river could be repaired, which is only a two days' job.

In addition to the material trains, all the refugees and families of railway employees who had been evacuated by train from Kurgan and sent East, have returned up to railhead and fill the station yards of intermediate stations. This was done when the successful White Army advanced from Petropovolask and held up the Reds' advance, and finally flung them back to Kurgan again.

Now if at this stage the Reds again advance, it means that all the refugees and material trains must again be sent back, and other trains which are pouring up must be stopped where they are, and if the advance continues, must be returned.

October 19th.—We got back to Lebedyja, where the Russian General Staff trains were, and no one seemed to know whether Lebedyja is going to be evacuated or not.

The situation is serious, as thousands of wagons are in this station yard, and all the staff trains will have to fall back if the Red advance is not stopped.

News has been received that the Reds are also advancing along the south line.

From Omsk the railway runs in a V-shaped single line, the south line running to Ekaterinburg and the north line to Cheliabinsk and Perm.

The Reds have turned our flank on both sides of the railway necessitating the centre, which is along the railway lines, falling back so as to keep pace with the retreating flank armies.

The most foolish thing in the world was to bring up the refugees and material trains so near the front before Kurgan was taken and the Russian authorities were told as much beforehand, but they were so cocksure of taking Kurgan that the Powers-that-be ordered that all trains containing Kurgan stuff and refugees and railway men were to be kept up at the front, so as to lose no time in running into Kurgan on its recapture by the White troops.

My officers are posted on sections east of Petropovolask, and as the evacuation from the front has started, I wish to get down and try and tackle the situation there.

Instead of issuing definite orders to the railway staff, the military authorities chopped and changed their orders for evacuation of trains, and a real fine block of station yards has set in.

The General Staff have decided to go back to Petropovolask,

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and I have decided to push off there, as it is my headquarters, and see what can be done.

Instead of taking only a day to reach Petropovolask, we anticipated taking four or five days.

October 20th.—We left last night. The Reds are advancing rapidly, and it is rumoured that some of our heavy guns had to be abandoned.

All last night the guns were going it "fit to beat the band," as one of the Canadian officers attached to us expressed it.

October 21st.—Station yards are filled with trains, but we are making better progress than I expected. Can do nothing *en route* to Petropovolask, as certain officials have received orders to take full charge of different sections, and these officials are difficult to get in touch with at present.

October 22nd.—Arrived in Petropovolask. The retreat is in full progress and the yard is full of trains. Trains are returning from the front, and we are running up light engines.

Am in daily consultation with the Russian Railway authorities and the situation is about as bad as it can be.

October 23rd.—The General Headquarters Staff have passed through and have made their headquarters at Bulavayo, and orders are out to evacuate this station. The trains which were between this station and the front are now either in the yard or have passed safely to the East. Many of the trains have been stabled at wayside stations, and had released their engines and it has added to the difficulties getting up engines from the East for these stranded trains.

People are coming to me in numbers asking me to get their trains and echelons away, and ladies and young girls, all refugees on their own, ask for help.

This is the work of the Russian Commandant, but these people invariably come to wagons with the British flag on them and ask for assistance. We do all in our power to help them in every way we can.

Coming down from the front my car was attached to an echelon containing wounded.

There was not a single doctor or nurse on the train, which was composed of wagons locally known as tiploskas.

It was very cold, and numbers of wounded whose wounds had only received very rough first field dressing came to my wagon.

As we have never had a doctor with us since coming up from Omsk, I carry a medicine chest with bandages, etc., with me, and I have had to do the best I can when our fellows fall sick. After ten years in India I managed to pick up enough know-

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ledge of simple doctrines in the way of First Aid not to be dangerous, and one and all of my "patients" have made marvellous recoveries, probably due to a sincere wish on their part to avoid further medical attention from me.

When the wounded men came to me I washed out their wounds which were festering, and applied clean dressings and disinfectants, and then gave them food and cigarettes. I am glad to say that whatever else I managed to do, the men said I relieved the pain of their wounds, and on reaching Petropovolask the doctor in charge of that place came and thanked me, and said I ought to have been a doctor. What ho! as they say in Spanish.

October 26th.—The railway battalion and armoured trains, which are the rear guard, fell back with us from the front, and my old pal Captain N. in command told me that every wagon must leave Petropovolask within twenty-four hours.

October 27th.—The trains were coupled up just as the wagons stood on the different lines, and we pushed them out by night. Only a few remained to get out.

All my officers and men got into their different cars from the rooms in which they had been living, and we all pulled out on the remaining echelons last night.

October 28th.—The railway battalion, as per usual, pulled up the points and crossings and generally cleared up the station, and then pulled out on their armoured trains, just previous to the Reds walking in.

All trains were "ribboned," that is, trains went down the line one after the other, with about 100 yards between the brake van of one train and the engine of the following train.

It was a slow process, and took us days to do runs which should have only taken a few hours.

October 29th.—We passed Bulavayo, where a part of the General Staff were; the other part had gone on to Issul-Kul, some eight versts down the line.

There were thousands of refugees trekking down the roads on all manner of vehicles.

October 30th.—Still on our way to Issul-Kul. We expect to arrive there to-morrow morning. The ribbon moves very slowly—we do sometimes three or four miles in one day, and are held up for hours at some wayside station.

What strikes one particularly is the vast numbers of able-bodied troops and officers who are going East in trainloads—no one appears to be able to explain why these officers and men are not at the front. The armies that were depended upon to

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hold the Reds have gone to pieces, and the Reds are marching on, apparently unhindered by any rearguard action.

October 31st.—Arrived at Issul-Kul. I wanted to detach my car there to assist in evacuation, but both I and the Russian officials and military authorities are compelled to go on, as the yard is so crammed that no shunting can be done and trains must go through in order to allow room for railway battalion trains to come in and destroy the station yard. I am compelled therefore to be swept on to Omsk, where the British Headquarters are, as there are no intermediate stations at which any shunting can be done.

I met one old interpreter, an Englishman, who had been in Russia for some fifty years.

When I met him some months ago at Kurgan he came up to me and saluted. He was an ex-Russian railway employee, and was still wearing his old uniform.

I asked him who he was, and he said he was an interpreter attached to the British Mission.

I next asked him what his name was, and he said Charles.

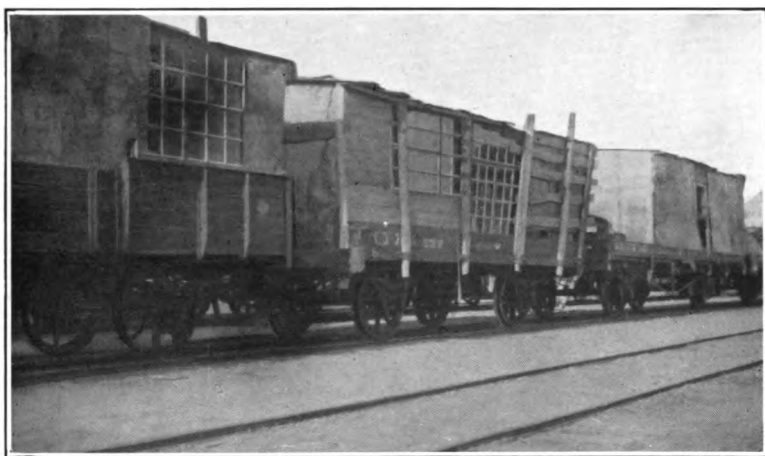
At this stage I must make a note that in Russia a man takes his Christian name as his first name and his father's Christian name as his second name, and his family name is omitted except when signing names to documents.

"Well, Mr. Charles," I said, "how long have you been with the Mission?" "My name is Richards," said the old man. "All right, Mr. Richards," I said, "what officer are you attached to?" "No, my name is Richard Charles," said old grey locks. "Very well, I will call you Mr. Charles," I said. "All right, sir," said he, with a resigned air, "it doesn't matter what you call me, my real name is Bates." I discovered later that his name was Richards Charles Bates, but due to the fact that he had been in Russia so long he had forgotten his family name, and I am not sure even now, and no one else is, whether the old boy's name is Bates Richards Charles, or Charles Bates Richards, or any other forms and order these three names can be put in, but we have agreed with B.R.C. to call him R. C. Bates.

Poor old Bates was at Petropovolask living in a wagon with his old wife, a small child of six or seven years of age, and a maidservant of some thirteen summers.

While the old man and woman went to the market, without orders from anyone or reference to anyone, his wagon was suddenly attached to a train leaving Petropovolask. The old man and his wife came to me, and I wired down the line to Issul-Kul to detach his wagon at that station, and got the

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SHELTERS BUILT ON OPEN RAILWAY WAGONS IN WHICH REFUGEES LIVED FOR PERIODS UP TO TWO AND A HALF YEARS. LARGE NUMBERS OF RUSSIAN NOBILITY OCCUPIED THESE IMPROVISED HUTS ON WHEELS. SIBERIA, 1919.



BOLSHEVIK PRISONERS CAPTURED BY THE "WHITES" AWAITING EXECUTION. THEY WERE SHOT SHORTLY AFTER THE PHOTOGRAPH WAS TAKEN.

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Battalion Commander to send a special telegram for this to be done.

On arrival at Issul-Kul there was no trace of the wagon in the yard, and we found from examination of the records that the wagon had passed Issul-Kul on train No. 120. I then wired to all stations from Issul-Kul to Omsk, and to our British officers at Kulumzeno, to detach the wagon at their station. It is a terrible business this wagon going off like this with just two children and no money or food, and all the worldly possessions and savings of old Bates are locked up in a big box in the wagon. I hope to goodness they trace the wagon.

On our way to Omsk. It will take us two or three days to get there. The trains moving very slowly indeed : mostly full of refugees, with wagons converted into living rooms. The majority of wagons have had windows made in the sides, and the sliding doors which are fixed in the sides of the wagons have been cut and swinging doors put in. These wagons are completely useless for future service for which they were originally intended.

All kinds of furniture is piled up on top of the wagon roof and gives them a slovenly and weird appearance. Anything from a motor bicycle, cart, sledge, household furniture of all descriptions, to a baby's perambulator, can be seen tied on to wagon tops.

The spaces between the wagons are also utilised by planks being fixed across the buffers, and on this platform wood for the fire-stoves in the wagons is stacked, and it is frequently utilised by refugees who are unable to find room in the wagons.

November 1st.—A heavy fall of snow during the night, and the weather suddenly turned bitterly cold. All the water and pools frozen. It is so cold that we have had to dig out and wear our fur caps to prevent the tops of our ears freezing. Our train arrived at the sorting yard outside Omsk, and as there was no chance of its being pulled into Omsk, two of us walked in five versts to report our arrival.

Omsk station yard is absolutely blocked. I have been given charge of the evacuation of Omsk station, and am busy making arrangements for all British cars arriving by different trains from the Front to go down the line to engine changing stations to control the movement of traffic.

To do this it is necessary to re-arrange the existing parties and changes from one car to another.

November 2nd.—Weather colder still. Sleighs are taking the place of wheeled traffic. To-day cars were placed in Ordnance yard in order to evacuate Red Cross depots. Attended a

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meeting of Ministers and high military authorities at 9 p.m., where plans for the following day were drawn up, and all the Staff in charge of different departments were given instructions as to what they were to do on the morrow. Meeting over at 11.30. Was very glad to get to bed.

November 3rd.—Trains are leaving Omsk, but not quickly enough. Both the north and south lines are coming into Omsk from the Front, and are absolutely blocked with a ribbon of trains. Trains must move from Omsk at double the speed they are doing at present.

The authorities are muddling things, and it is next to impossible for us to help them. They agree to our suggestions, and issue orders to their staff accordingly, but there are so many Bolsheviks amongst the local workmen and traffic staff that it is difficult to get the work done, and the authorities appear to be afraid to take drastic measures.

November 4th.—The British Military Mission are packing up, and are getting ready to leave in a day or two. The mess has been evacuated, and wagons are being loaded up. A heavy fall of snow with a sharp frost has compelled people to get into their fur coats. The river has frozen over, and small boys are skating about on it. The Red Cross have "pulled out."

November 5th.—Some British cars have arrived, and transfers of officers and men have been effected. One party is ready to push down the line to Tataskaya. I attend nightly meetings, but the result is very unsatisfactory indeed. Trains are being evacuated from Omsk very slowly, and there is not the slightest doubt but that thousands of wagons will be lost to the Reds, also a large number of engines. This is a great pity, as ever since the evacuation of Perm in the Ural Mountains, all the way down the line all rolling stock has safely been evacuated, and only condemned wagons and hopelessly dead engines have been left for the Bolsheviks. The Reds are very hard up for railway wagons. With the wagons in their possession at present, they cannot use the railway to any very great extent, and transport by carts over thousands of versts is a difficult matter, and in winter more difficult still. It is therefore very important that no rolling stock should fall into the hands of the Bolsheviks.

November 6th.—General Knox's echelon pulled out last night, with the British Mission personnel. Two officers of this Mission still to come into Omsk. They have missed the General's train and will have to come on with us.

Some English people, including one English lady, have arrived in from the district. They came in on sleighs, having travelled some hundreds of versts. They started off in their

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motor, which got bogged on the steppes, and after trying to get the motor away, had to abandon it and buy horses and sleighs in the villages and do the rest of the journey on horses.

They had a terrible time getting over the bridge at Kulumzeno to Omsk. For twenty-four hours they sat in the pouring sleet and snow, as there was no shelter whatsoever from the severe winter weather. The only member of the party who was kept warm and dry was a small boy, aged four years. These people had no food for two days, nor could they purchase anything. These unfortunates were told that the British had left Omsk, and they were on their beam-ends to know what to do in the way of leaving Omsk for the East.

Mrs. B., the English lady, told me that the whole night one incessant stream of vehicles drawn by tired horses was trying to get across the bridge into Omsk, and about half-past eight at night the Cossacks guarding the bridge refused to allow any more vehicles to cross till next morning. Mr. B. and his party left their conveyance and went to the different echelons standing at Kulumzeno and begged to be allowed to take shelter in one of the wagons. All wagons were hopelessly crowded by a panicky crowd of refugees.

Dead beat, the B.'s went from "tiploska," as the wagons are called, to tiploska, trying to get a place, and finally, seeing that the party consisted of purely English people, a tiploska occupied by some locomotive boiler cleaners gave them permission to ride in their wagon over the bridge into Omsk, where they arrived next morning.

I took this party at once over to the British cars, and they were soon made very comfortable.

November 7th.—Work going on very slowly indeed. Trains are not leaving Omsk for the East anywhere near fast enough. On both sections west of Omsk there is a steady ribbon of trains ; something like 200 trains all told are waiting to come into Omsk, and there are thousands of wagons in Omsk and the sorting yards, all of which must be got out before the next five days, otherwise they will be lost.

It is obvious to everyone that many trains and engines are going to be lost, and yet only some seven trains a day leave Omsk for the East. It is calculated that Omsk must receive and dispatch thirty trains a day if all trains are to be saved, as the Reds are coming along at a great rate.

November 8th.—All kinds of people, such as Persians, Russians with English names who cannot speak a word of English, claim to be British subjects, and at this eleventh hour come to us to evacuate them. We are taking them all on and crowding

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them into our echelon somehow. All the British cars are scattered about the yard, and it is a difficult business getting them together so as to leave Omsk as one echelon.

All of us very busy trying to clear the traffic and get the trains away, but at every turn it almost looks as if the authorities did not care whether trains got away or not. The evacuation officials are so bothered by hundreds of people thronging into their offices asking a hundred and one questions regarding their own particular echelons that they do not know whether they are standing on their heads or their heels.

The men in the yard are Bolshevik to the backbone, and it is very difficult to know who can be depended upon and who cannot.

November 9th.—Still the same old game. We got out eleven trains during the last twenty-four hours. The whole of the population of Omsk appears to be leaving, and this added to the dense throngs of refugees arriving by trains and on horses and on foot, causes indescribable confusion.

We are getting our cars together, and so far as our work is concerned, the work is going on all right.

All day long, ladies, young girls, Russian officers of all descriptions, come to the R.T.O.'s office at the station and ask us to help them.

It is impossible for us to do anything, and we direct them to the Russian Commandant.

No Russian officer can leave Omsk unless he has written authority to do so. Many hundreds have thrown up the sponge and have left their regiments, and are legging it east without authority.

The different regiments devoid of their officers break up, and the soldiers foot-slog it away from the front.

From the rate the Reds are advancing, it is very certain that no rearguard action is being fought at all, and the great Siberian Army is rapidly melting away, and to-day I hear that some more of the heavy guns have been abandoned.

November 10th.—All the British from up the line are now in Omsk, and in their cars. We hope to have our train ready to-morrow, as we must pull out in a couple of days at the latest.

We got out only nineteen trains during the last twenty-four hours, the situation is hopeless, and no one, not even the ministers, seem to have any power.

The Railway Battalion have arrived, and our old friend Captain N. in charge is taking over the Omsk yard.

This officer has done this work right from the Ural moun-

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tains. He and his men arrive at a station a few days before the Reds are due, and it is their business to clear the yards in any way they can, take up the points and crossings, and generally so mess up a yard that the enemy have great difficulty in putting it straight again.

Whenever the Railway Battalion arrive at a station the panic is complete.

Captain N.'s style of work is to couple up all wagons standing on different lines just as they are and pull out of the station. This obviously is the only way to go about things at a time like this, yet one sees stupid and useless shunting being performed to please the whim of some muddling minister or other potentate.

November 11th.—Only eighteen trains left Omsk in the last twenty-four hours. People west of Omsk are evacuating their echelons and walking into Omsk. As it is impossible for these persons to find accommodation on east-bound trains, they will have to foot-slog it on from Omsk eastwards.

Captain N. has not been given a free hand, and in consequence he cannot get the work done.

It really does look as if some person in authority is playing into the hands of the Bolsheviks.

Some of the higher officials are at loggerheads with each other, and instead of the work in the yard going on rapidly, things are comparatively at a standstill.

Our echelon is not yet complete—we are doing the work of getting the echelon together ourselves, as in spite of orders issued by the highest authority, no attention is paid to them.

Some of the British cars are sandwiched between "condemned wagons," and have been pushed into sidings with wagons which are to be left at Omsk. We have got hold of shunting engines and fetched such cars out, and have placed them on our train.

The army which was supposed to represent the front line is straggling into Omsk.

The river has frozen just hard enough to allow the army with their guns to cross.

November 12th.—We must hustle along now, things are looking very black, and the Reds are expected at any moment. It is not the regular Red Army which is feared so much as the local Bolsheviks in Omsk, who are very numerous and strong, and they are expected to rise and take the town at any time.

No one is allowed to be out after six o'clock at night.

We go about, however, as the sentries allow us to pass when we answer their challenge by shouting out Angleski (English). Work almost at a standstill. Have been doing yard shunting, getting our echelon ready to pull out.

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November 13th.—We left Omsk at 2 p.m. The whole night W. and I were up shunting. Our train was ready, and we got the line clear to pull out on.

We got some sixty versts down the line, and then halted. Thousands of wagons must be lost in Omsk ; the Red Army must be only a matter of a few versts away by now, and all along the road is a continuous stream of sleighs—so close behind each other that one cannot pass through the line.

November 14th.—We heard this morning that the Bolsheviks entered Omsk last evening. A close shave, as when we were only a few versts out of Omsk, street fighting took place, and the Reds made an encircling movement and cut the railway east of Omsk at the first crossing station or “raziast,” as it is called, thereby cutting off all trains which were standing in Omsk waiting to leave.

The Government and its ministers gave out that they would not leave Omsk, and that Omsk could be held for a few days longer than it was. When it was discovered at the eleventh hour that the Supreme Ruler and the higher ministers had left, the under-ministers and their families protested violently against being kept back. In order to stop further protests many of them were shot, and a few hours afterwards the Reds crossed the frozen river and entered Omsk, the main body crossing opposite the “Viadika” station and striking up towards the “Staffka” as the General Headquarters of the Russian Ministry is called.

Utmost confusion appears to have reigned. Regiments belonging to the White Army were despatched to prevent the Reds cutting the line east of Omsk. These regiments, on arriving at the point they were supposed to guard, received information that the Reds were advancing through Omsk.

Meanwhile regiments stationed in Omsk were told that the Reds had cut the line east of Omsk and were entering Omsk from that direction, with the result that regiments of the White Army met each other in the dusk, and each side thinking the other force to be the Bolsheviks they were led to expect, opened up fire on each other and heavy casualties resulted before the mistake was discovered.

November 15th.—Went on down the line travelling on the west-bound track. The line east of Omsk is double track, and west of Omsk on both the north and south sections it is single track.

From Omsk only important trains were despatched on the west-bound track which, of course, in normal times is used for

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up trains only, the east-bound track being exclusively used for down trains.

Our train left Omsk on the west-bound track, and we passed solid ribbons of trains standing on the east-bound track. During the last day or two before we left Omsk trains were despatched on the east-bound track one after another with only a hundred or so yards apart. We arrived at Tataskaya this morning, where the Tataskaya party were waiting. They had been sent on ahead to control the traffic from Omsk and also on the section east of Tataskaya. It was impossible to exercise any control at all, and apart from furnishing "dope" as to how many trains daily left Omsk, arrived at Tataskaya, and left that place, etc., etc., the work they did was a pure waste of time.

However, our C.O. decided to leave this party where they were, as another party was joining them, and then both were going on to the next engine-changing station, Barabinsk, where they would remain, and furnish more dope and help in the workshops in getting engines repaired and seeing that the men in the shops did some work.

November 16th.—We arrived at Barabinsk at 10 a.m. in the morning and made a round of the shops and the station.

Things were in a hopeless muddle, and the workmen in the shops in a very mutinous spirit.

I saw fifteen stiff corpses hauled out of a train and flung by the side of the railway. These men were patients from a sanitary or hospital train. They had died and were frozen stiff in all sorts of positions, and on arrival of the train at Barabinsk were thrown without ceremony on to the snow, and there they lay in all kinds of attitudes, half clothed, until someone thought fit to dispose of the bodies.

No one paid the slightest attention to this spectacle. The sight was too common, being a daily occurrence.

November 17th.—Trains arriving from the west very slowly, and are leaving Barabinsk eastwards equally so.

We hear that something like 150 trains were cut off and lost in Omsk.

The Reds are advancing down the line at a good old pace. There is no Siberian Army left to put up a rearguard action worth mentioning.

Captain N. of the Railway Battalion has lost his three armoured trains. The station at Omsk was attacked by the Reds and the attack beaten off.

Captain N. lost seventeen men killed and many wounded, and he himself had to escape from Omsk on foot. We hear he

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is safe. Good old N. Bad luck losing his trains! He was absolutely tied up by a lot of incompetent superior officers. One of his so-called superior officers I had known for some time, a Colonel B., and this man was invariably under the influence of vodka, and a bigger thickhead and nincompoop never existed.

November 18th.—The work in the loco shop going on very badly. The workmen getting worse. They are all Bolsheviks, and are cocking up their tails now they think the Red Army will soon be in Barabinsk.

They were paid their wages this afternoon, and by evening they were roaring fighting drunk on cheap vodka. The three overseers in charge have given up trying to control the men. The Russian officials have appealed to the British Mission to help them, and Colonel J. has decided to leave behind all officers and men who have had experience in locomotive shops. He has also left instructions for the Tataskaya parties to stop at Barabinsk and help in the shops.

The Russian authorities are very pleased. However much control our officers and men can exercise at Barabinsk, they would be far more useful down the line. It is a pity they are remaining, especially when the fact remains that the Tataskaya parties which contain practically all the locomotive officers will not arrive at Barabinsk for a day or two, and within five days from now, or a week at the most, it will be necessary for them to leave again on account of the Reds advancing.

November 19th.—Things pretty much the same. We got in touch with the Tataskaya parties. They will not be here for some few days yet, and we are leaving to-day for Novo-Nikolivsk, where we will try to control the movement of trains each side of the town.

November 20th.—We left Barabinsk early this morning on the west-bound track, and are passing trains standing or moving slowly along on the east-bound track.

The weather cold, and snow falling, nothing very exciting happening, and very difficult to kill time—the monotony is pretty putrid.

Heard of a most amusing incident this morning in connection with one of our "provodniks," as the man in charge of each railway first or second class car is called. The duty of this individual is to see that the carriage is kept warm by stoking up the fire, filling the tanks with water and keeping the carriage generally clean. Two of our Canadian officers were supping at a restaurant, and had been imbibing enough liquor to make them feel in a friendly mood.

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About halfway through the meal, a Russian entered the restaurant and nodded a friendly good evening to the two officers.

The man's face looked familiar and the two officers without hesitation invited the Russian officer, as they thought he was, to sit down, and C., one of the Canadians, with a magnanimous flourish of his hand, told the waiter in fearfully bad Russian to bring a first-rate bottle of the best, and ordered dinner for the guest. One meets hundreds of Russian officers in all sorts of uniforms and garments, and it is difficult to remember the faces of them all, so C. and J. felt satisfied that their guest was one of their numerous Russian officer friends, and they intended to do well by him.

After an excellent dinner had been partaken of on the part of the guest, and several bottles of vintage had been mopped up, C. asked the guest whether he knew any other British or Canadian officers. "Oh, yes," said the guest, "I know Colonel S. very well." "Colonel S.?" queried C., who had been with Colonel S. for some time—"do you know Colonel S.?" "Put it there, lad," and C. held out a hand about the size of a dinner plate.

The guest did not quite follow the drift of C.'s remark, but readily shook hands, saying that naturally he knew Colonel S., considering the fact that he was the provodnik of the Colonel's railway carriage. To use C.'s own words—"I guess we beat it quick, boy, out of that gor-damned restaurant."

We arrived in Novo Nik, and here again there is nothing but absolute confusion.

No one seems to care a bit about the situation except the refugees, who are wild with terror.

The mere name Red makes them shiver with fright. Novo Nik is very "Red," and is full of local "Reds" who are only abiding their opportunity to rise and take the town.

The real danger for the moment is not, of course, the fear of the advancing Red Army—the danger, and it is a very real one, comes from the local Reds, who would stop at nothing if they could for a moment get the whip hand.

Novo Nik is an exceedingly pretty place, and is a centre for the fur trade.

I bought some fine Siberian furs for a mere song. I only wish I could invest in some more, only it's impossible to cart any more stuff about than that I already possess.

Amidst all this confusion and terror, theatres, a circus, and a cinema flourish, and people indulge in ordinary pastimes. A lot of people imagine that they are quite secure, and that the

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Red Army will not reach Novo Nik. These people in turn will join the panic-stricken throng when they realise that all their worldly possessions, house, furniture, horses, etc., will have to be abandoned, and they will be lucky if they manage to escape eastwards themselves.

December 1st.—Received orders to go to Tiaga, which is 215 versts east of Novo Nik. The Czecho-Slovaks are forcibly commandeering engines to get their echelons out of Tiaga, and my party are to help the Russian authorities to put a stop to this.

We cannot get the parties from up the line into Novo Nik. The Russians have lost all control of things. The Poles are in Novo Nik, and they have some twenty-two echelons up the line west of Novo Nik.

Commanders of Polish echelons up the line are forcibly putting those on the east-bound track on to the west-bound track.

To-day I heard over the 'phone a complaint from a roadside station-master that the Polish Commander of an echelon standing at his station had threatened to shoot the station staff if they did not put the Polish echelon on to the west-bound track and, moreover, threatened to machine gun any echelon passing theirs. This sort of thing is a daily occurrence, and it is our job to endeavour to stop this high-handedness. It is not possible to have officers and men at each station, but there is no trouble at stations where our officers are in charge.

The whole control of the movement of trains is upset by the Poles taking the law into their own hands.

The same thing is happening at Tiaga, only that it is the Czechs there who are playing Old Harry.

December 2nd.—A part of the British Mission are remaining on at Novo Nik, waiting for the three parties up the line to arrive.

The Reds have taken Tataskaya and are expected soon at Barabinsk. The parties up the line are on different echelons and are trying to get into Novo Nik.

Orders have been issued by the Chief Controller of Traffic to put the British cars on to fast west-bound track trains, but still they are moving slowly along on east-bound trains.

We took control of the train despatching office some days ago, and have put a stop to all kinds of Russian and other officers using the despatchers' instruments.

All day long the despatcher was worried to death by officers demanding to use his 'phone to call up stations west of Novo Nik, and the work in consequence was hopelessly disorganised.

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We refuse permission to all and sundry to enter the offices at all, and the Russian authorities told us that they were powerless and we only could do anything in the matter.

It was a pleasure informing young upstarts or doddering old Generals that, much as it was regretted, they could not use the 'phone, and that was final. They protested and blustered and finally withdrew, much to the delight of the unfortunate Russian underlings whose duty it was to endeavour to carry on as much railway work as was possible under the present conditions.

December 3rd.—Trains are leaving Novo Nik at an average of seven or eight a day. The largest number was eleven trains in one day.

If the trains west of Novo Nik and in Novo Nik yard itself are to be saved, at least thirty trains per day should leave. It is quite apparent that many more trains are going to be lost in Novo Nik in exactly the same way as they were lost in Omsk.

The parties up the line have come in a little closer to Novo Nik. They are running short of food. Why don't the British Powers-that-be put their foot down and insist on the British cars coming on the west-bound track at once. Too much soft soaping going on, and promises given by the Russian authorities are worthless, and I would not trust three-quarters of them any further than they could be pushed.

December 4th.—Still in Novo Nik, though we have been ready to pull out for the last four days.

We calculate it will take from seven to eight days to go from Novo Nik to Tiaga. We are booked by the east-bound track, attached to the echelon containing the wives and families of Russian officers who are supposed to be at the front.

I have been given charge of the echelon, since there are ten British cars on it.

All day long officers, their wives and female relations come to my car or other cars on which is nailed or painted the Union Jack, and ask to be taken out of Novo Nik. The law of the land prevents me from giving such permission as will enable them to travel on our train, but I put them on the right track to obtain such permission, and back they come with a beaming countenance, having obtained the desired authority to leave Novo Nik.

I managed to take a walk up into the town to-day. I bought some lovely furs very cheaply. One set I paid about £4 for are valued by a British subject on our echelon, who is a fur dealer in peace times, as being worth from £25 to £30. Owing to Novo Nik being evacuated such things are going for a song.

I also bought some more Ural Mountain stones, such as

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amethysts, turquoise, beryls, and also an Alexandrite, which is greeny-blue by day and heliotrope and pink mixed by artificial light.

The up-country party still progressing eastwards very slowly. We expect to pull out of Novo Nik to-morrow. Minor rows have started in the town, and twice we have had to "stand to."

It is a poor game being roused suddenly in the middle of the night, having to dress, sling on revolver, and seize a rifle, and stand to, waiting for the attack.

The first alarm was the result of information received that at 2 a.m. an attempt was to be made on Admiral Kolchak, the Supreme Ruler of Russia, who was living in his train in the station yard.

The attempt did not come off at the expected time, so we rested on our bunks with all clothes on ready for immediate action.

The ladies of the Mission were instructed to lie flat on the floor of the cars on firing commencing, and wait further orders.

The second alarm was set for 6 p.m. last evening. A shot or two were fired some time during the evening, but no alarm was raised, and we hoofed off to bed cursing Bolsheviks and all other peace disturbers.

December 5th.—We slowly pulled out of Novo Nik at 1.30 this afternoon and stuck in a gradient and had to wait for a banking engine to come behind and give us a shove.

The up-line parties moved nearer Novo Nik, but are still a good way off. The Reds have taken Barabinsk, and are coming on in the same way as before—unchecked. They stick to their tactics of encircling movements, thereby cutting off trains and people. A fair old panic prevails. Horrible tales of Bolshevik outrages come in, mutilations, etc., and photographs of such mutilations are posted up in station premises for the public to see. I think this is to encourage recruiting, but all it does is to terrify people, who simply have one mad desire, to fly anywhere and anyhow from the advancing Reds. People who stay in the towns are usually safe enough, but any refugees caught in echelons or otherwise trying to get away from the Bolsheviks are "for it."

If refugees feel that they cannot get away they go into a town and lie doggo and destroy their documents. With any luck they escape imprisonment or death if the Bolsheviks are satisfied that such people were not trying to escape from the Red Army.

December 6th.—We only travelled 54 versts yesterday, and are now at a station called Moshkovo, where there is a fine old

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block on. There are several trains in the ribbon in front of us trying to get on. I went to the Station Commandant and asked him whether he had received instructions to put our train on to the west-bound track. He replied he had not. I then asked him to wire to Tiaga and get permission to put us on the west-bound track. He promised to do so.

All day the Russian officers on our train flood my carriage, asking when the train is going on, and whether we can get on the west-bound track or not. They fairly "have the wind up." Our engine ran short of water owing to the long stops between stations. We all had to turn out and shovel snow into buckets, and these were passed from hand to hand along a long line of standing men from the spot where the snow was loaded into buckets, up into the tender of the engine. It was a long and very cold business, and we were very glad when it was over.

December 7th.—We only moved on a few versts to the next raziast, where we made another attempt to get out of the hopeless ribbon of trains, on to the west-bound track.

The Station Commandant stated that he had received orders for our train to be put on to the west-bound track, and said that at the next station we should be switched over.

Spent the majority of the day in the station office, which was in charge of the Poles, waiting for a reply from Tiaga to our request to be switched over. Had to stuff the engine twice with coal and also with snow. Everyone turned out; even the women on the Russian part of the train helped.

December 8th.—We arrived at Oiash this morning, and we went to the Station Commandant and told him that we intended to go on the west-bound track at this station. He replied that there were five echelons to leave before ours, and after these five had left, we should go on the west-bound track.

In the evening our turn arrived to go on the west-bound track after two Polish trains had passed. The Controller down the line said that two Ministers' trains were about to leave the last station, and they would run through the west-bound track after which our train would go. I told the Commandant that I was not going to allow any train to go in front of ours, and then the Controller said that he was coming on the Ministers' train and would fix things up for us, and also said that there were seven British cars on the Ministers' train. While we were waiting for the two Polish trains to leave, the first Ministers' train with the Controller of Traffic arrived. He said that the west-bound track to the next station ahead was blocked, and it would be necessary to run to the next station on the east-

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bound track, which was clear, and run round the block, and switch on to the west-bound track at the next station.

I protested against this arrangement, but barring the use of force there was no way of our getting on to the west-bound track at Oiash, so our train was started off on the east-bound track. The seven British cars turned out to be five cars belonging to Colonel J.'s party. They left Novo Nik with Colonel J. and a Russian officer interpreter to help along the three British parties who apparently had not arrived at that station up to the time the five cars left Novo Nik.

The Ministers' train with the five British cars and the Traffic Controller left Oiash on the west-bound track and we left a few hours later on the east-bound track.

December 9th.—We left Oiash in the early hours of the morning, and arrived at Cheboola Raziast, where we are stuck. The trains are one behind the other, a dozen trains in front and very many more behind.

We appear to spend our time snowing the old engine. Spent the night in the station office watching developments, and trying to get our train switched over. The Poles in full control of affairs, as they have armed force at their backs and the Russians do not get a look in. The unfortunate Station Master nearly distracted. Each echelon commander is demanding to have his train put on the west-bound track, and the Poles will not allow the S.M. to do anything without their orders, and they have repeatedly told the Russians to go to a warmer climate. The Poles, however, do not try the bullying stunt with us, and we have told them that we have the Military Controller's orders for our train to be put on to the west-bound track, and although they do not quite like it, they are not rude, but at the same time it is quite clear that for the present we have no hope of getting out of the station.

December 10th.—The Russian officers pressing us to get our train on to the west-bound track. They are ignored absolutely by the Poles, and their one and only hope of ever getting on, is the fact that ten British cars are on their echelon. The engine on our echelon is a thirsty devil. Three and four times during the day we have to fill up the tender with buckets of snow. We are not the only ones by any means who are doing this—every echelon is doing the same thing. Only one or two trains have left this station, the block seems as bad as ever.

December 11th.—Same performance, snowing and coaling our engine. The block must be pretty bad ahead at Bolotnaya—both tracks seem to be ribboned; only three Polish trains have left. All day long a continuous stream of sleighs passes us.

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The Siberian Army has completely broken up, and soldiers on foot tramp along the railway track with their packs, and the officers and transports pass along on sleighs together with countless numbers of refugees. We hear that the Reds are making an encircling movement and are cutting in at Oiash. This piece of news has greatly excited the Russian officers, and they are running about like ants, telling each other what dreadful things will happen if our train does not get a move on. We are not left out by any means, and they crowd into our cars and tell us wonderful stories of what the Reds are doing. Whilst at Novo Nik we bought some red wine and pure spirit, out of which we made a very pungent brew of vodka. We gave the excited officers a shot of this good stuff and tried to calm their fears. They are rather like overgrown babies, and were soon feeling almost cheerful; we told them that we were doing our best to get our echelon along, but that it was no good howling for the moon, and that moreover the Poles had advised us to drop the echelon we were on, and sail away with our ten cars attached to the engine, and went on to say that we had no intention of doing this or going off in our cars without them. It was lovely to hear what they had to say on the subject of the Poles' suggestion, and we howled with laughter after they had taken their departure.

Same old thing. I think we are anchored at this station. To make things more pleasant our duplex engine broke one of its coupling rods, which has resulted in the engine working on two cylinders instead of four—thus halving its power. We shall need the engines from the train behind us to give us a shove if our engine cannot manage to pull the train without assistance.

We moved a few versts down the track and pulled up. After a wait for a couple of hours we put more snow in the engine, and moved on a few more versts without assistance, and then stopped about eighty yards behind the train in front of us.

December 12th.—We moved on a few more versts. Hear that Novo Nik has fallen. I wonder whether the parties west of Novo Nik have arrived in yet, and where Colonel J. is. There was a local rising in Novo Nik apparently, which the Poles who were there put down.

A couple of French officers said that they had to leave their cars west of Novo Nik and come into Novo Nik on foot. They also stated that they heard that 45 British had also to leave their cars and were very badly off for food. I wonder what truth is in this statement—the number of the party we're

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anxious about is 45, and I think there is little doubt but that the British cars will have to be abandoned.

The Russian officers fairly excited, and come and tell us that within the next twenty-four hours the Reds will cut in at Oiash ; if that happens we have to take to the road.

It would not be very much to worry about if we had not women and children with us. So many claimed British nationality at the last moment, and we were compelled to evacuate them. At a time like the present it is the very devil having women and children with us. They are nothing more than a millstone round our necks. If we were only a party of officers and men, we could move on short notice and take our chance of a band of Reds intercepting us—but with women and children it's quite another story. Unfortunately also we have officers and men who are not in a fit enough state to foot-slog it in this severe weather.

Poor old Bates could not find his wagon with his child and all worldly possessions in it. From Novo Nik he went back to Barabinsk to hunt for this wagon. It is like hunting for a needle in a haystack. Mrs. Bates is with us, and spends most of her time crying—poor old thing ; it is as bad a case as could be.

I suppose old Bates is with the British party returning to Novo Nik, and will join up with his wife when we reach civilisation again.

December 13th.—We have moved on a few more versts, and early this morning we arrived at Chahlovo raziast. The next station is Bolotnaya. I wonder when we are going to arrive there.

We went to the station office. A Polish Commandant in charge. He states the west-bound track to Bolotnaya is blocked with trains, and there is no chance of our train being switched over at this station, as the yard is blocked.

The Russian officers from our train and also from Russian echelons in the station yard and trains standing several versts away are crowding into the station office trying to get their echelons shoved along. They "have the wind up" properly, and some of them are evacuating their echelons and legging it, as horse transport is unobtainable. The Poles say that they will get an engine from Bolotnaya for our train in place of our dead engine, and they will utilise our engine to do assisting work on trains requiring a second engine.

I replied that we would keep our engine until I got another one, a bird in the hand being worth two in the bush.

We 'phoned to Bolotnaya and asked if they had any spare

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parts for duplex engines, and they replied that they had the part which would replace the broken connecting rod of our engine. There is an echelon ahead of us at this station containing mostly civilians, women and children in plenty. The engine of their echelon had frozen up, and they had been waiting there for two days for a new engine. We sauntered up their train and looked at the engine. The civilians thinking we were out for "pinching" their engine, crowded round us and said they would not allow Poles to snaffle it. We informed the dear things—the crowd consisted mostly of women and girls—that we were not Poles, but British. A howl of laughter met this statement, and we were almost mobbed by the ladies all wanting to know whether they had any hopes of getting an engine, and whether we could help them. We said that it was very necessary that we should help them, as until their train moved on we were stuck, and far from wanting to take their engine, we would try our best to hurry up a new engine from the next station.

We have been up all last night, and it looks as if we shall have to be up all to-night. The Poles made two attempts to take our engine, so I ordered a tin Union Jack to be nailed on each side of our engine, much to the delight of the driver and his crew, and still more to the delight of the Russian officers on our train, who were in a great state over the attempt at engine bagging on the part of the Poles.

A guard was also put on our engine, consisting of five Russian soldiers and an officer in charge. We also had a British officer and guard to give the Russians support. From that time onwards our engine was left severely alone.

CHAPTER V

THE LAST DAYS OF THE RETREAT

December 14th.—We left Chahlovo early this morning after the civilian echelon had pulled out.

Our train is standing at the outer signal, as the station yard at Bolotnaya is congested.

I interviewed the chief of the engine depot, and he said he would do all he could to repair our engine, and said that he had no other engine in the yard to give us in exchange for the engine we had. It was a lucky thing that we hung on to our engine at the last station, as only one was available, and that was given to the civilian train, and we should have been left high and dry had we agreed to let the Poles take our engine on the promise from them that they would get us a new engine from Bolotnaya.

There is no likelihood of our engine coming into the loco shed until late this evening. The spare part is ready to be put on to our engine, and our driver states that the job will only take two or three hours, so that all being well we should leave this station about nine o'clock to-morrow morning at the latest. We have decided that, owing to the fact that the Reds have cut the line at Oiash, just as they were expected to do, we will evacuate our train at 2 p.m. to-morrow if we are still here by that time. The Reds are only 42 versts away, and since they can travel and are travelling at the rate of at least 30 versts a day, we must get the ladies on.

It will be a very difficult matter to get sleighs, but fortunately for us, an officer from the Yagashi Battery, while passing in his sleigh along with the battery, spotted our flags on the wagons and came over to see us.

This battery, or rather batteries, as there are four batteries of Yagashi, have English guns and Canadian horses. The officers have been trained by British officers and all their equipment supplied by the British.

The officer who came to see us spoke English fluently, as he had been in England four years. He told us that two batteries were with him, and two were following and would be at Bolotnaya to-morrow, and would stay twenty-four hours. He gave us a letter to his Colonel, and said that should we not leave by

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train by to-morrow afternoon, we most certainly should abandon the train, and should go to the Colonel commanding his battery, who would be only too willing to get us away on the battery sleighs.

This was indeed a great piece of luck, and after having some hot coffee and thawing out a little, he said good-bye and went off to his billet in the village.

Our train still standing outside the station, and we have had to fill up the engine tender with snow and hand-fill the tender with coal from the coal truck attached to the train several times. Polish trains are passing on the west-bound track, and after a short delay are leaving the station.

The Controller from Tiaga has ordered that our train is to follow two Polish trains on the west-bound track.

December 15th.—Was up all last night. After our train arrived in the station about 9 p.m. with great difficulty and delay, we got our engine into the loco shed. We were informed by the Russian officers that the Poles were contemplating taking our engine, so we doubled the guard. When our engine arrived in the shed, we measured the coupling rod which had been got ready to be put on to our engine, and found that it would not fit by two inches. This dished things completely. The Chief of Depot told us that our engine could not pull the load it had, and it would be necessary to reduce the load by at least 15 wagons.

All last night two of us were in the station office, and we were told that our train would be the next to leave. That was at 1 a.m. this morning, but a Polish Commandant called the Controller up on the telephone and told him that he was determined to put his own echelon on the west-bound track, although the Controller had ordered that only two Polish trains and our train were to leave on the west-bound track. A tremendous argument took place over the telephone between the Polish Commandant of the echelon and the Military Controller of Traffic, who was a Russian officer, it ended by the Pole telling the Controller that if necessary he would turn out 600 men and machine guns, and forcibly compel the station authorities to put his echelon on the west-bound track.

The Station Master thereupon sat down and wrote out exactly what had occurred and tendered his resignation, which he handed to me. I spoke to him and said he must carry on his work, and I told the Polish officer that my echelon had been ordered to be put on the west-bound track, and I would not agree to any echelon which had orders to go on the east-bound track being switched over to the west-bound track in front of

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mine. He argued away and tried to induce me to agree to his echelon, which he said was quite ready to leave at once, going on the west-bound track, and said that by the time our echelon was ready his echelon would have reached the next station.

I replied that his echelon was ordered to go on the east-bound track, and that orders should be obeyed, and at any rate I would not have his echelon blocking ours. Although he knew that we had no force at our disposal he was not prepared to fall foul of us.

We then left the office at 2 a.m. and went back to our train, where we informed the senior officer of the Russian part of the train that the last fifteen wagons of the echelon would have to be cut off.

He was asleep when we went to him, but he soon roused up the other officers, and passed the word down that the people in the last fifteen wagons must turn out without loss of time and find room in other wagons.

Very soon our cars were crowded with Russians asking where they should go, and we directed them to ask the senior Russian officer, who was looking after this business.

Our engine was still in shed, and we had great difficulty in getting it back, and it did not return until about 6 a.m. this morning. Leaving a guard on the train, an interpreter and I went to the telegraph office and sent a telegram to the British officer stationed at Tiaga, and then asked the Controller to start our train off on the west-bound track. He replied that we should leave about 10 or 11 o'clock.

At nine o'clock I received a telegram from General B. to leave our train and buy horses and sleighs and come to Tiaga by road. Imagine what this order meant to us.

Parties of twos and threes at once went off to the village to try and locate the Yagashi Batteries. It was a very difficult matter, as the village was chock full of troops and no one knew where any one particular regiment was quartered.

By a stroke of great luck the interpreter I was with asked a soldier near the station whether he could direct us to the Battery. The man happened to be a driver from the very battery we were looking for, and he took us to where the Divisional Commander and the Colonel commanding the 1st Battery were billeted.

As we went down the street to the billet we passed a battery of eight guns, the wheels of the gun carriages and ammunition wagons were fixed to runners, which converted the carriages into sleighs. Each gun and wagon had a small Union Jack

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painted on it, and the traces and fittings were all British and the horses were large Canadian animals.

The whole turn-out stood out from the rabble of other horse-drawn vehicles, and drew the attention of the throngs of refugees and soldiers going through the village. The entire Siberian Army is *non est*, and is trekking eastwards. Large numbers have remained in villages and will wait for the Reds and then join forces with them, not because they are Bolshevik inclined, but owing to the fact that they have been left to their own devices by their officers, and the soldiers have nothing to fear from the Bolsheviks, and many of the retreating soldiers arrive at towns where their homes are, and they go no farther.

We arrived at the billet where the Colonel was and we asked him whether he was in a position to do anything for us. He was delighted to see a British uniform, as he had been with the British instructors in Omsk for some time, and knew a great many of our officers. He asked us how many people we had, and we told him about fifty persons, including some fifteen ladies and children also. He raised his eyebrows and shook his head in a doubtful kind of way. We said we were willing to buy horses and sleighs (though we might as well have said we were willing to buy the moon), and also our canteen wagon was at his disposal in order to ease the food situation.

He replied that whatever happened he would take us all with them, and that we must get ready to start within two hours. We hurried off to the station to await the sleighs which the Colonel said he would send to the station. On arrival at the station I found that all the women and children, together with some officers and men who were not in a fit state to face a cross-country journey on sleighs had been placed in one wagon, which the Commandant of the Railway Battalion said he could take on his train, which was ready to leave. As we knew that this was a train which would get preference over all others, the officer, Captain Horrocks, who had made this arrangement, was warmly thanked. We piled as much luggage into the one car, which was a large one containing eight coupés, as we could, and also stuffed boxes of canned stuff and other food into the car. We all quickly thrust a few things into kit bags. I hastily ran through all official documents, and together with my code book burnt them all. Imagine the scene, surrounded by a crowd, evacuating a home we had lived in for seven months in half an hour.

The Yagashi officers and some men arrived soon afterwards and we dished out heaps of canned stuff and thousands of cigarettes to them.

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I had flung a lot of the stuff I did not intend to save from my own personal property into a trunk, but the Yagashi insisted on taking the trunk.

Within an hour our baggage was on sleighs, which drove off to join the column, and twenty of us, officers, N.C.O.'s, men and interpreters marched off with our rifles, revolvers and haversacks to the road near the station, to await the battery which was expected shortly.

In about half an hour the head of the column appeared. We said good-bye to all the Russian officers on our echelon, whom we had warned earlier in the day on receipt of the telegram that we were leaving our train, and also to the rest of our party who were on the Railway Battalion train.

The officer in charge of the battery instructed us to jump on the transport sleighs as they passed, one man to each sleigh.

The time was five o'clock and almost dark. The days are getting shorter. I remember in June last seeing the sun set at 9.30 p.m. and being able to read a book in the twilight at 11 p.m., and it was light enough next morning at 3 a.m. to read a book ; only four hours of darkness, or rather, twilight.

It was bitterly cold on the sleighs. Several of us had not been in bed for 72 hours, and we were not prepared for a night's journey on sleighs, perched as we were on the top of baggage. Anyway we were all very cheerful, and very glad to think the women and children were comfortable in a nice warm car and had not to do this sleigh journey. It would be the very last word if the women with babies had to do this. The weather was terribly cold, and the frost settled on our eyebrows and eyelashes, and we were soon compelled to get off the sleighs and walk alongside in order to get the circulation back in our legs and arms.

The going for the first ten versts was fairly good, but all the same I came two pips into the deep snow, which managed to get down my neck and up my sleeves.

I then walked a bit whilst the horses were walking, and when they started to trot I dropped behind to see how the others were getting on. I met several of our fellows ; they seemed to be getting on all right, but were perished with cold. Most of them had tumbles in the snow, but did not seem much the worse for it. All were very cold, however, and were periodically compelled to walk. This was no easy matter, considering that we all wore sheepskin coats and had to walk in soft snow which gave under our feet and caused much side-slipping. I then did a jog trot while the horses were walking, and caught up my original sleigh, and I clambered up. We did another

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five versts on a fairly good road, and then struck some very bad going. I had to wrap my muffler round my fur cap over my nose and mouth to prevent the former freezing. Icicles soon formed on the muffler round my mouth. The felt boots issued to us were about as much use as a sick headache, and I repeatedly had to walk and run to prevent my feet from freezing. The road was so bad that we were tumbling into the snow with painful frequency, and "hot air" was let loose in good old English. It is quite a treat to hear an English voice howl out now and again after hearing continual Russian from morning to night. We passed a village at 10 p.m., and were then told that we had only another seven versts to do before we arrived at the village where we would billet for the night.

When going up a rise one could see the column, which was about three to five versts long, like a black snake over the white snow, and the sleighs and horses showed up clearly in the moonlight.

The sleighs were so close, one behind the other, that if a horse stumbled the horse immediately behind would blunder into it.

After travelling another hour we saw the twinkling lights some distance ahead of the village in which we intended to billet for the night. Some of the Yagashi officers and men had gone on ahead to arrange accommodation for the battery and fodder for the horses.

The little Siberian ponies which pulled the sleighs were white with frost, their shaggy coats being covered with it, and icicles were hanging from the hairs near the nostrils and mouths.

On arrival at the village the transport came to a stand. The driver of my sleigh, after unharnessing the horses, conducted me to a wooden shack, where I found the Colonel of the 1st Battery, also the Divisional Commander. I was very stiff with cold indeed, and it took me some time to thaw out. Cups of hot tea and bread and butter were soon forthcoming, and we dived into it with great gusto. An officer was sent by the Colonel to find out where the other British officers and men were billeted, and he soon returned and reported that all were present and were having a hot meal. The Yagashi soldiers looked after the horses which drew our baggage sleighs.

Whilst we were having supper at 12 p.m. orders were sent to the village to procure horses and sleighs for ourselves. As soon as supper was over, I fell asleep at the table, and must have slept for about an hour, when the Colonel woke me up and asked me to have a shot at vodka. I was all over the suggestion and soon felt like a two-year-old after two shots.

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There was only one large bed in the one room, where eight Russian officers and two of us were to sleep.

The Divisional Commander and the Colonel would not sleep in the bed owing to some superstition, and neither would any of the other officers. The only other member of the British Mission besides myself was a Russian officer interpreter, and he likewise refused to sleep in the bed. I said I had no scruples about sleeping in any bed, and as the bed looked clean and free from visitors, I was into it in about ten minutes. I did not fall asleep at once, as the vodka drinking went on in great style. When I did fall asleep I was soon awakened by the terrific medley of snores which proceeded from all over the room. In the next room a baby woke up and added to the din.

December 16th.—We were up at six this morning and had a breakfast of baked potatoes and butter, followed by bread and jam.

The bread was the usual Russian black bread, but not at all disagreeable. As soon as breakfast was over, I went out into the yard to examine three ponies which had been brought along for sale, together with two baggage sleighs. Two of the animals appeared to be all right, but I did not like the looks of the third one, but as it was necessary for us to have horses and sleighs at all costs, I bought the whole outfit and paid 1,500 roubles for them.

We loaded up two of the sleighs and tied the spare horse on behind and loaded up our baggage on the Yagashi transport and settled the officers and men on different transport sleighs, and started off for a 40 verst journey.

The going was not very good. The Colonel insisted on my riding in his sleigh, which was quite different from baggage sleighs, as it was purely a riding sleigh and very comfortable.

At 12 o'clock noon we arrived at a village where we had lunch in billets and rested for two hours.

The weather was bitterly cold, and one of the men managed to get his feet frozen, which was very unfortunate.

We wrapped his feet in blankets and resolved to tackle them at the next halt.

After a two hours' halt we loaded up and started off. We had a jar of emergency rum with us, and before continuing the journey I gave a shot all round to our officers and men, which bucked them up tremendously. Everyone was quite cheerful and fit, but one or two felt the cold a bit.

I expected to feel it more than I did, considering I had spent ten years in India ; but, barring once or twice when travelling

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in the evening or at night, and I lost my hold on the baggage sleighs with cold, I felt quite braced up.

We went over some small foot hills and through some villages. We tried to get news at one of the stations we passed close to as to the whereabouts of the Railway Battalion train, but no one appeared to know anything about it. We knew that everything was all right and that the train had left Bolotnaya, but all the same all kinds of terrible possibilities presented themselves in my mind, such as the line ahead of the train being blown up by Pro-Reds, derailments, engine breakdowns, etc., and these thoughts did not cheer me up any too much.

We travelled on for another four hours before reaching our billets for the night.

I had a cup of tea at the Colonel's billet, and then made my way to the building where the British were billeted. This building turned out to be the Town Council house, and the monthly sitting of the greybeards comprising the Council was in progress.

They had been expecting us, and were very interested to see British, so much so that they appeared to have no further interest in the meeting, which forthwith broke up. We ordered the man in charge of the building to provide some hot stew and tea. We opened up some canned provisions and prepared a meal on the Council table. The man in charge of the building was living in one of the rooms with his family, and it was an easy matter for him to produce a stew on short notice.

The town was simply crowded with troops, and every house was crammed with soldiers. The Council house had five rooms; all rooms were occupied with the exception of the Council Chamber, which had been reserved for us.

Everyone was very nice to us, and we paid liberally for everything we had.

We gave the Chief Councillor a lot of rum, which he drank with evident relish. All of us had a stout shot of rum, and felt like two-year-olds. The stew was excellent, and after a good meal we spread a blanket on the floor and very soon snores filled the room.

Before turning in I sent off a Russian soldier to the village to buy some goose-fat to put on the foot of Private J., the man who had a frozen foot.

There was an enormous blister on the first and second toe, and a blister the size of a hen's egg on his heel.

On arrival of the goose-fat, which the man said had been given by his sister with her compliments, we rubbed the fat

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well into the skin of the foot, and after liberally smearing the whole foot, we bound it up.

I managed to buy a pair of "peemies," or Russian snow-boots. These are made from stiff strong felt and reach up to the knee, like a large size field boot. They are the one and only thing which will keep the foot warm in winter when trekking. The ordinary felt boots as issued to the Canadians are all very well for walking about the streets when one is only out for a few hours, but when it comes to trekking in the snow and then entering warm houses where the snow on the boots instantly melts, thus wetting the boots, they are utterly useless. Once the boots become damp one cannot go outside the house without their instantly freezing stiff as boards, and the foot at once becomes icy cold.

Peemies are wonderful, and the foot, even in the severest weather, is invariably beautifully warm.

When going into a house the snow is brushed off the peemies so as to keep them dry. This is easily done with peemies, whereas with the canvas boots issued by Ordnance the snow adheres to them. Even if peemies get wet, the foot, though damp, does not freeze.

December 17th.—We were up early next morning, as an officer came and told us that six sleighs were coming for our baggage. We were all ready by 7 a.m., and expected the sleighs at eight o'clock. At eight o'clock a soldier came and said that the sleighs would be ready at nine o'clock. I went over to the house where the Colonel was billeted and told him that six sleighs were turning up at nine. He replied that our baggage should have left at eight o'clock, and said he could not understand what officer or soldier informed us that six sleighs were turning up at eight o'clock.

We found that the Russian Commandant of the town had taken upon himself to provide us with six sleighs and we, thinking that the officer and soldier were sent from the Yagashi concluded that everything was all right. The Colonel told us not to depend on the six sleighs arriving, but to pile our luggage on to the two sleighs we had and start off, and he would send an officer to stop six sleighs from his transport to await until we caught up.

This we did, and within fifteen minutes were on the move with all our luggage stacked on two sleighs, with us tramping behind.

The town was thick with moving sleighs belonging to different regiments and units, and we experienced great difficulty in picking out our way through them, as sleighs were branching

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off along different roads and streets, and were so close behind each other that we had to wait some time before we could break through the road we had to take to catch up the Yagashi transport.

The going was very bad indeed, and the luggage continually fell off the sleighs and had to be picked up and shoved on again whilst they kept on the move. As we were in the column it was impossible to stop the sleighs to pick up kit which fell, and two or three had to seize the stuff and double up with it.

Just before we left the town we saw a boy driving a sleigh which had a large wicker basket for its body. We seized the horse, and told the boy that his sleigh would be required by us until we caught up the Yagashi transport. We piled some of the baggage from the other two sleighs on to the third one and fell into line again. We were all walking, as there was no room on our three sleighs, and we could not leave them to ride on any other, as the kit had to be watched.

After going three versts the Colonel caught us up in his riding sleigh and stopped to pick me up. I told him that I would remain with our transport, but he said it would be better if I travelled with him quickly for the four versts to the next village in order to see if sleighs could be obtained there. This we did, and we travelled quickly, passing the other sleighs in quick succession, as the Colonel's sleigh had an English horse in the shafts and a stout Siberian pony as an out-runner. The best horse is invariably put under the Russian wooden arch which joins the two shafts over the horses' withers, and the second and third horses are harnessed by traces to the sleighs and run on each side of the centre horse.

When trained, the flank horses gallop with their heads turned well outwards, whilst the centre horse trots very fast, and with the bells tinkling and the ornamental strappings the effect is very great.

The road led over the hills, which were thickly wooded with fir trees. The sun was shining brightly and the scenery was simply magnificent.

The snow clung to the fir-trees and shimmered in the sun and the road, thronged with sleighs, cut through the dense forest.

On reaching the top of the hills we could see the line of sleighs reaching along the valley and over the hills in the distance—looking back one could see the same thing. There were simply thousands of sleighs one behind the other in a never-ending stream.

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Cavalry of all descriptions were also trekking along in the one long column, which consisted of numberless regiments and units which all went to form the Siberian Army now dispersing eastwards, none stopping to fight any rearguard action.

On reaching the village an officer from the Yagashi came up and said that their transport was only a few versts ahead. After going two more versts I told the Colonel that I must return and see how our fellows were getting on.

He gave me one of his battery horses, which was a large Canadian saddle horse, to go back on.

I only went back a verst or two before I came upon our crowd. They had commandeered two more horses and one sleigh, which brought our number of horses and sleighs complete to five. This was much better, and our people were able to keep together with the kit. The Colonel sent back an officer and some men to keep with us and help us should we require help, and also to see that we did not take the wrong road, as roads branched off at villages, and some sleighs branched off from the track we were following.

The going was perfectly awful. The snow was anything from two to five feet deep on each side of the track, and the horses frequently slipped off the track into the deep snow, and had to be fished out.

Also the track itself was most uneven, and great drops into ditches and hollows, and climbs up steep banks, were frequently necessary.

The track also sloped at an angle of 45 degrees, and then a drop in the track would present itself. Over would go horses and sleighs, and the column following would have to pull up until the sleigh ahead was righted and the baggage loaded again. Not only were our sleighs subjected to this treatment, but the majority of the sleighs in the column turned over frequently, and as a result the progress made by the column was very slow.

At half-time I handed round a tot of rum and some bread and cheese. We fed as we went along as there was no stopping if we were to reach the village by nightfall.

Towards dusk we came to a very steep bank indeed, so much so, that it was necessary for one sleigh to take it at a time. The column had thinned out by now, as other regiments in the line had branched off into other villages, and the battery and cavalry only remained.

Our sleighs took the bank without mishap. We took it in turns to drive and rest.

After climbing the opposite bank we arrived at the village in

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which we were to encamp for the night. The village was only a very small one, and was full of troops.

We were shown our billets ! We had been in a good many peasant's huts, but this billet was "the outside edge." There was one room in which there was a large stove. The room was about 12 ft. by 10, and into this room eighteen of us crowded. The owner of the house was a woman with five children. As this was the only accommodation available in the village, we prepared to shake down there for the night.

We unhitched the ponies and gave them some hay, and put them into an open shed. Siberian ponies are perfectly wonderful beasts. They stand out in the open with their coats white with frost, and eat snow when they want a drink, and dig in the snow with their forefeet until they come to the grass underneath.

These very ponies had done this since leaving Omsk, a distance of some 2,000 versts. The average they did was 50 versts a day, and this they kept up day after day with very little rest at night, and very inferior feeding. We allowed our ponies to feed on hay for at least two hours before giving them a feed of oats. If a Siberian pony is tired, a feed of oats immediately on being unharnessed has a very bad effect on it.

The shed under which we had tied our ponies had an open roof, or practically so, but it made little difference to the ponies, which were used to spending the nights in the open air. The weather was bitterly cold. It had been snowing during the day, and the fine snow had managed to get down our necks and under the lapels of our fur caps, and then melted and again froze, making us feel like living icicles.

After settling the ponies for the night, we crowded into the one room and commenced cutting up meat, preparatory to making a stew. We put on a kerosene tin full of potatoes with their jackets on, to boil. There was standing room only, so we detailed cooks and waiters, and the remainder were told to squat in the corners and round the room against the walls, out of the way.

In about an hour and a half dinner was ready. The good old rum jar was like the famous cruse of oil, it never seemed to give out, and we had a stout shot of rum all round.

After supper we had a washing-up party. The competition to be in this party was not half so keen as was the rush to be a cook or waiter. However, some of the wallflowers cheerfully did the needful, assisted by the old hen, our hostess. She really did have the gift of the gab, and cackled away for all she knew how. She had never seen English before, "but heard

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tell of them," and told us, in answer to a pert question, that she was very favourably impressed by the representatives of that race present in her humble abode.

As soon as supper was cleared away we held a consultation as to how we were all going to fit in for a sleep. The brick stove was in the centre of the room, and on one side was a brick shelf on which the old woman and her five kids slept. The youngest of the family, aged some few months, started to cry, and ran up and down the scale rapidly. It had rather a big mouth, and when reaching a very high note one of the sergeants, with great presence of mind, stuffed a caramel into the "orifice." Luckily we had a few packets of caramels. That baby shut up like a spent gramophone record, and sucked away at the caramel. The next brat in size wanted a caramel and, instead of indicating its desire in the approved manner, commenced to whimper. The baby had a fairly large mouth, but the next in size had a porthole in the face for a mouth. It took two caramels at a time to close that porthole effectively.

Eventually, after silencing the orchestra, we lay down, practically in each other's arms, in rows. Feet stuck out near other people's heads, and I felt the hot breath of my next door neighbour on the nape of my neck. We had been in bed (?) some fifteen minutes when someone said that he could hear someone moving about outside. One brave lad seized a revolver and stepped from face to face out of the room.

One of the ponies had broken loose, and after tying it up the hero stepped from stomach to stomach back to his space on the floor. Sleep for me was out of the question, but in a very short space of time terrific snores and groans filled the air, showing the majority of the party were asleep.

Whichever side I turned on to I was greeted by a loud snore within a few inches of my face. Choosing the lesser evil of the two snores, I faced that, and in about an hour got so used to it that I was able to think of other things.

The snore behind me was unique. The upward breath was a succession of snorts, and when exhaling a shrill whistle between the teeth gave it a most musical effect. I've heard that kind of snore before. I dozed on and off till about 3 a.m., when suddenly a hidden rooster crowed. This bird crowed three times a minute, and in a short space of time everyone in the room was awake. A candle was kept burning the whole night, and by the aid of its light we tried to discover the hidden cock. The noise appeared to proceed from the stove chimney. That damned bird crowed and crowed, and we were absolutely unable to find him, and gave it up. At five o'clock it was

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quite dark when four of us got up to water the ponies and give them another feed of oats. We had to lead the ponies down a very steep bank, a verst away, to a hole in the ice over a small stream. My two animals would not drink, so I brought them back. I expect they had been eating snow.

December 18th.—By six o'clock everyone was awake, and we harnessed up the ponies to the sledges and loaded up our kit. We had some baked potatoes and some bread again for breakfast. We were ready to start with the column.

Captain Horrocks went off to see the Colonel, as he had arranged the previous night to purchase three more horses and sleighs complete. The small boy with the basket sleigh was willing to sell his, since he had no home and was indifferent as to where he went. He said that if we did not commandeer his sleigh other people would most certainly do so, and he would rather let us have it than other people. We understood him clearly; we were ready to pay a good price for his sleigh, and other people, we knew, would not be so particular. We bought the youth's outfit for 3,500 roubles, gave him a good feed, and kissed our fingers good-bye to him.

Yesterday we only did 15 versts owing to the fearful roads. We ought to have done about forty. We hope to reach Tiaga by this evening with luck. I hope to goodness we do, and that there are some arrangements there for us to go on by train, and that above all things the car containing the ladies is there. We will not leave Tiaga without them whatever happens. The column started off at 8.30.

We left the beaten track owing to the congestion of traffic, and we are following a new track through the forests and over the hills. I can only make brief notes as we go along, but things are too forcibly imprinted upon my memory for me to forget incidents such as are happening these days.

We managed to buy three more horses and sleighs at the village where we stayed the night, and now we have eight sleighs complete of our own. The going was perfectly awful, and our sleighs along with others frequently turned over. The new track was through deep snow, and long halts were necessary before a passage through the snow could be made by the head of the column. There were frequent deep holes and steep banks and ravines to negotiate, and the ponies stumbled and fell, got up again, and had to be assisted in dragging the sleigh up banks.

The ponies were not in good fettle at all; the poor beasts were very tired. Hundreds of ponies had to be turned loose by other columns as they were done for, and we were constantly

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passing dead and dying horses. The average Russian is very cruel to animals. If one puts out a hand to stroke a pony, the animal at once flinches, and will not allow itself to be touched. This is due to the fact that the drivers flog the pony across the face with anything they can lay their hand to, if the animal does not at once do what is wanted, or does not understand immediately what is yelled to it.

The dogs are just the same. No dog will come up to one unless it does so cringing on its stomach.

The poor ponies had been on the track for two or three months, and were underfed and very much under-rested. Day after day they tugged heavy sleighs up hill and down dale through deep snow, and when from sheer exhaustion they fell and were too weak to get up again, they were flogged and cut loose from the sleighs and left to die, in the midst of the forests or steppes.

It was heartrending to see what happened to animals, but it was just as bad where human beings were concerned. Sick men had no hope of getting through; it was a case of the survival of the fittest. I saw a Cossack flung out into the snow. The man lay there with his sword between his legs. Our lot got him on to a sleigh, but too late, he died soon afterwards. Any amount of men were left dead and dying, but thank goodness, our particular column left no one behind. Throughout it is one mad frantic rush to get away from the Reds.

I am also personally aware of what happens to the Reds caught by the Whites. Officers are bayoneted unmercifully, and atrocities are perpetrated.

One regiment of the Reds captured were stripped and turned out into the snow naked. They were dead in a very short time. The cold was so intense that death was a matter of seconds only. The result of all this is that the White Army which at the present moment consists of flying troops, each one thinking only for himself, are like wild beasts, absolutely callous and indifferent to human suffering. All are not like this by any means, but at the present time things are so awful and hopeless that it is absolutely and physically impossible to help others in a worse plight than oneself, though whenever possible one does whatever one can.

At about four o'clock we arrived near the railway line after leaving the forests. The roads through the forests were awful for the sleighs, but the scenery was perfectly lovely.

It was very cold, and I felt snow melting down my neck. It had been snowing most of the day, and I had gathered snow up my sleeves and down my neck due to the sleigh I was riding in turning over so many times.

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On arrival in the town of Tiaga we saw the soldiers belonging to the White troops helping themselves to goods out of the shops ; in other words looting was in full progress. The people in the towns we passed through have nothing very good to say about the White troops, who are very rough and domineering, and quite the majority of the towns and villages are looking forward to the day when the Red Army enter their villages and towns. It is said on all hands that the Reds do not loot or commit any outrages, and that they pay for all they take. If this is true, it is no wonder that they are popular and welcome, because they do more for the good of the people than the White troops are doing.

On arrival at the house where arrangements had been made to billet us, some of our party which had gone on ahead, met us and told us that they had arranged a hot meal for us in a wagon belonging to the British Mission, which had come through with the British cars attached to the Minister's train which passed our train this side of Oiash.

After having something to eat, we went over to the station office and saw the Polish Commandant who was in charge of the movement of trains.

As we were at dinner, by the way, Mr. B., a British subject who was along in the car containing the ladies, suddenly appeared. We yelled with joy. The Railway Battalion train with our wagon arrived in Tiaga within ten minutes of our arrival. Oh, we were so pleased—tons were lifted off our chests. We sped off to the car and kicked up a hullabaloo. All were delighted to see us. We were perfectly filthy, with a five days' growth of beard and clothes wringing wet, and our revolvers strapped to our belts made us look like desperadoes of the worst order.

The Polish Commandant promised to attach our car to the first Polish train leaving Tiaga, together with a *tiploska* containing nine Persians who claimed to be British subjects, and who had been accommodated in a wagon by the R.T.O. who was stationed at Tiaga. The R.T.O., owing to a mistake, had left the station the night before. While he was asleep his car had been attached to a train which pulled out during the night. We hear he is returning to Tiaga by sledge, leaving his car at a station about 22 versts down the line.

We got all our baggage from the billets, and piled it into the *tiploska* and car. The car was already full, but we put two people on each bunk and one on the floor of each *coupé*, that is, there were five people in a single *coupé*.

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The ladies insisted on doubling up. They would not hear of another sledge journey.

The tiploska had some twenty-five persons in it, and the car which is meant to accommodate sixteen people, had forty-two in it. We went round to say good-bye to the Colonel of the Yagashi Battery. All the officers were very nice indeed, and said they were very sorry to part with us, and if we wished they would be delighted to take us on with them to Krasnoyarsk, another 500 miles, but we would rather travel 500 versts by train than one in a sleigh in such bitter weather.

The Divisional Commander and the Colonel asked us whether we would accommodate three ladies, wives of the Yagashi Battery officers who were travelling by sleigh.

After what the Yagashi had done for us, it was utterly impossible to refuse them anything, and we said we would be only too pleased to do anything we could for them. We were up all night getting people settled.

The R.T.O. arrived by sleigh and took over our eight sleighs and horses, which he handed over to the Poles. There was no one else to hand them over to.

December 19th.—Next day, at 2 p.m., we pulled out of Tiaga and went about 21 versts that day. Our echelon was a Polish one, and we left on the west-bound track. We passed several trains on the east-bound track. We stopped to stuff snow into the engine ; also coal. We spent half our time snowing that engine.

December 20th.—We arrived at Pehtach this morning, and remained there the whole day. Everyone wondering where the Reds are. Rumour has it that they will be in Tiaga within twenty-four hours. Sleighs are passing us all day in one endless stream. People on foot also passing our echelon. Several people we know drop in to see us, and each one tells us stories of where the Reds are, and what they are doing to people they catch.

One hair-raising piece of information imparted by an officer who says he got it from somebody who absolutely knows it is true, is that the Bolsheviks make gloves out of the hands of their victims. The details were forthcoming as to how the gloves were manufactured. There may be some truth in this, as I have seen photographs showing vividly playful tricks played with the wrists and hands of victims. If I were to put down every story I heard about what the Bolsheviks do to people who fall into their hands, there would not be room for any other subject in this diary.

December 21st.—The Polish Commander came to see us this morning. He was kind enough to say that he would supply



BRITISH MISSION SLEDGES ON THE RETREAT JUST PRIOR TO BEING CAPTURED.
NOVEMBER, 1919. SIBERIA.



THE BRITISH PRISONERS OF WAR UNDER GUARD BEFORE ENTRAINING AT
KRASNOYASK FOR IRKUTSK. MARCH, 1920. SIBERIA.

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the whole of our party with bread and hot food from his kitchen attached to the train. We thanked him very much and gave him some tins of jam, for which he was in his turn grateful.

Before leaving he asked two of us to go and see him in his wagon to-morrow evening, which we promised to do.

We arrived at Soodjenkah this afternoon. The station, which is only a small one, is very congested, and we are making very slow progress. We are some 37 versts from Tiaga, and we hear that the Reds are attacking the town.

We "snowed the engine" three times to-day, also got coal off the coal truck into straw sacks, and carried the sacks to the engine and emptied the sacks into the tender.

December 22nd.—We arrived at Razyasd this morning. We are now 46 versts from Tiaga, which place, rumour has it, has been taken by the Reds. The Poles were determined to hold the place, and they formed a front line and kept their armoured trains for the protection of the station. We, therefore, cannot understand how the Reds could have taken the place by this time. Some of our officers who were west of Novo Nik we hear are close behind us. Hooray, hope to see them shortly! Did some more work on the old engine. The wretched old thing leaks at every joint, and appears to want double the amount of water that any other engine needs.

December 23rd.—This morning we arrived at Yah-Yah raziaast, and two officers and one interpreter from the "up-country" party arrived in. We were delighted to see each other, and greeted each other with shouts of "Yah," "Yah."

They told us that all the three parties west of Novo Nik had to leave their carriages and trek eight versts only into Novo Nik. There they were met by Colonel J. and his interpreter, and the whole lot left in their car on a Polish echelon, and after going some 50 versts down the line, they were compelled to leave their echelons and take to horses. After going some distance by horses it was decided to split up the party, and each one get on to Tiaga the best way he could. Having come to this decision, officers and men commenced jumping echelons, that is they would ride on an echelon until it came to a stop at a station or pulled up behind another train, when they would drop off and walk on till they arrived at the train which stood first to move on. They would then ask the echelon Commander for permission to ride on the echelon, and with any luck would be invited to step inside and would be given food, and would stick to that echelon until they caught up the one ahead, and then the performance would be repeated.

The three officers rode with us for a few versts, but would

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not stop with us. They were too anxious to get on, and they were quite satisfied with the way they were getting on, and the progress of our train was much too slow for them.

After a good meal and laying in a store of provisions we gave them, they bade us adieu and hopped on to the leading echelon.

At 7 p.m. we arrived at Ejmorskaya, which is 70 versts from Tiaga. I think there is little doubt but that the Reds have taken Tiaga. The Poles did put up a fight there, or beat off the first attack. The armoured train, we were told, was furiously attacked, and there were piles of dead bodies all round it. The train fought to a standstill and no one on it escaped, and the train is now in the hands of the Reds. The Poles are walking in from echelons behind us, and it is rumoured that those falling into the hands of the Reds are being whipped. This rumour has stirred up the Poles. They really "have the wind up," and each echelon Commander is making frantic efforts to get his train away ahead of others.

December 24th. Christmas Eve.—We left Everka razias early this morning, and at 2 p.m. arrived at Antevkoolskayah, which is a small crossing station some 8 versts from Mariensk. Two of our officers left us two days ago jumping echelons in order to get into Mariensk, which is a fairly large station, to buy provisions. This morning many officers and men who were with the "up-country" parties overtook us, and they all crowded into our carriage. The babel of voices was terrific. We were all delighted to see each other safe and sound, and we heard details of what happened to them since leaving Novo Nik. They had all been jumping echelons and alternately riding in sleighs, and had been making good progress.

All had got out of Tiaga before the real fighting took place, with the exception of four officers including the Colonel and one Russian officer interpreter, who apparently are at Tiaga by now, but when last seen were the other side of Tiaga. I think these five officers stuck to their car too long. When the others took to the road, these five decided to remain on in the car.

Two of our officers were in a wagon at a station the other side of Tiaga when the station was attacked by the Reds. They only saw four casualties all told, and then saw the Reds walking down the train knocking on the doors and telling the occupants to get out.

There were some Russian officers in the same wagon as our fellows, and these officers tore off their epaulettes and flung away their revolvers into a corner of the wagon, and everyone decided to lie still and see what happened, as the small armed

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force in the train were hopelessly outnumbered and were caught napping.

Presently a knock came to the wagon door, and an order was given for the occupants to get out. Everyone kept quiet, and the knocking and order was repeated. Getting no response, the Reds passed on down the train. After waiting for two hours until it was dark, and hearing and seeing no signs of any of the Reds about, the people in the wagon got out and made off down the track, and arrived at Tiaga without encountering any more Reds. It was a narrow squeak, and apparently the Red force which attacked the station were the usual encircling party who make a detour and come in and cut the line, thus preventing trains getting away, and after accomplishing their object, foregathered at the station, leaving the railway track unpatrolled knowing that there was no one present at the station who could repair the line even if it were possible to do. Goodness knows what has happened to the Colonel and the others. There is little doubt but that they have fallen into the hands of the Bolsheviks.

We are stuck at this little wayside station. We have managed to beat round and knock up from goodness knows where, some vodka, and an old Russian gentleman on our train dug out of the bottom of a big box, a bottle of real whiskey. When we saw the bottle we could not believe our eyes ; we hadn't seen whiskey for years ! This is Christmas Eve. We have got a guitar on the train which was handed over to me to knock into shape, as I attempt to twang the banjo, and the guitar required a bit of manipulation in order to convert it to the less dignified instrument. Our Christmas Eve dinner consisted of soup from the Poles and a plate of rice each, which we washed down with shots of vodka. After dinner, as we had no Christmas crackers, we cracked a few jokes instead, and then the guitar-banjo got going, and we let out some good round choruses, also some new stuff in the shape of "Helen of Troy," "Give me the moonlight, give me the girl," etc. We went through a large number of songs, and then individuals crept out of their shells and surprised us all by their parlour tricks.

The vodka bottle being properly killed to everyone's satisfaction, we rolled up our sleeves and put our ears back prior to tackling the whiskey.

Amongst forty odd people, one bottle of whiskey does not go far, but the ladies were not for whiskey, and some of the men were happy enough on vodka, so the whiskey bottle went further than was expected.

We kept up the sing-song till about 11.30, and then turned

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in. One bright youth said he would like to see Christmas Day in, but could find no one on our car to support him, so he went out and found the conductor, who was only too willing to do any mopping up of spirit that remained.

The conductor was an old friend of ours, as we had frequently to bribe him in order to see that our car, which was on the end of the train, was not cut off, and also to mend the couplings which mysteriously broke two or three times.

Thus we spent Christmas Eve, with the train at a standstill and utterly impossible to do anything as the block was some 50 versts away.

December 25th.—We stuck at the raziast the whole day. I, with two others, walked into Mariansk. The station absolutely blocked. It looks as if there is no hope of our train, which is standing behind others, ever getting into this station. As the Reds behind appear to be catching us up, we went to the Commander of a Polish Red Cross train standing in the station at Mariansk and asked him whether he could possibly take the ladies from our car on to his train. We explained that his train would get through if any train did, as his train was given preference over all others. There was a car belonging to the Americans whom we discovered on this train. I had met some of them before, and I solicited their help. The Commandant agreed to take the ladies, but said they would all have to get into one tiploska which had a stove in it, and there was no room for another living soul.

As it looked as if we should have to abandon our train owing to the Reds behind overhauling us, and due to the fact that it was reported that the Reds were making a detour to cut the line at the bridge the other side of Mariansk, we jumped at the offer. Anything was better than the women and kids having to walk or jump echelons. The weather was bitterly cold, and even if it had been warm the thing was impossible. Safety before comfort, so we arranged to transfer the women from our car to the Polish Red Cross train as soon as our train arrived nearer the station, which it was expected to do at any moment, as the trains ahead of ours had moved into the station.

At 4 p.m. our train pulled up almost alongside the Red Cross train, and the transfer was effected. The ladies were quite happy about it, but did not like the idea of separating from their husbands, who were all civilians, British refugees. The tiploska was not sufficient to accommodate all the ladies, and they were far from comfortable, but kept very cheerful, and said they would settle down all right.

We gave a lot of the provision to the ladies, and the O.C. of

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their echelon stated that he would supply hot meals and bread, butter and cheese. This was excellent.

Their train pulled out about 9 p.m. with a clear track in front of it, and we then went back to our train, which was standing at the other end of the yard. There we found the officers who had been sent in to buy provisions, and we shipped a frozen carcase of beef, and a pig on to the roof of our car to wait there for further attention.

Our train was ready to pull out at about twelve o'clock. We had had a very trying and hard day full of difficulties, and knotty problems, which were satisfactorily solved, and altogether hoped sincerely that we would not have to experience another cheerful (?) Christmas Day like to-day.

The officers who had gone on ahead had arranged a dinner at a house in the town, but it was impossible for any one of us to go there and eat it, as we could not tell at what time our train would pull out.

December 26th.—We only came 20 versts since last night, and here we are snowing up the old engine and giving her coal. We appear to be in a fine old ribbon of trains. We arrived at Soosovo at 4 p.m., and again stuck. We have made up a song about snowing the engine, and pumping up water by means of a hand pump, which is carried in front of the engine. On arrival at a frozen stream we break a hole in the ice, and then six men get on to it and pump up water into the engine standing above us. Naturally everything freezes, the pump has periodically to be thawed out, also ourselves and our hands. Pumping water into an engine with a hand pump with some 60° of frost with a wind blowing, is some game. In between coaling and putting snow into the engine we have to saw timber and put that into trucks in case our coal gives out. The Russian word for snow is sneike, and our sneiking song is as follows, set to the tune of "At One and Two I'm with Maud and Loo" (from the *Bing Boys*).

THE ENGINE.

"At one and two we all give it snow,
Three and four, two tons more,
At five and six it's with coal we fix.
Seven and eight we pump up the water.
At nine and ten it is coal again.
Eleven it's sneike, gee it's great ;
But the stuff we give at twelve
It is wood, which we saw,
A bally game we abhor
Shush—then we burst and do 21 verst
And we start our day over again."

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A verst is about two-thirds of a mile, and actually our average per day is 21 versts—I wish Farmer Giles would tell us what he thinks of this ; our opinion is not fit for publication.

December 27th.—We arrived at Averyanooka raziaist at 8 p.m. There is no knowing how long we will have to stay here, but gossip has it that we shall leave during the night. Last night we had to turn out at 2 a.m. and stuff snow into the tender. We have divided our car into two “sneiking” parties.

The Poles do not do their share of work, and the Polish men tell us that their officers should do some work and follow the example we set them. The Polish officer fancies his chance much too much to work at shovelling snow and coal into an engine, and does nothing except stop in the cars and issue orders. At a time like this, it is everyone's duty to turn to and work. On other trains I have seen women and girls working with a will, and cheerfully ; they set the men a good enough example.

The women of Russia are totally different from the men ; everyone says so. Why it should be, goodness knows. In character, conduct and pluck they leave the Russian male animal standing.

December 28th.—We arrived at Tyajen, which is 44 versts from Mariansk, which, it is rumoured, is in the hands of the Bolsheviks. We must get a move on or leave our wagon, as 44 versts is running things rather close. Such a distance is nothing to the Reds. The whole time, Poles are going past us on foot, having abandoned their echelons, and sleighs full of troops and refugees are streaming along every available track. We witness very distressing scenes when the sleighs come to bad bits of road and the exhausted horses fall and plunge in the deep snow in endeavouring to haul the sleighs up out of deep ruts. The half frozen occupants of the sleighs get out from underneath their rugs, etc., and assist the horses to drag the sleigh over the worst parts of the road.

Sometimes the horses fall down and have not the strength to get up again out of a snowdrift, and then there is no alternative but to abandon the horse, and, if there are no reserve horses available, the sleigh and its contents also.

The horses are left in the snow to recover themselves. Many, after a rest, get up and wander off, and others die where they fall. Even the horses that are able to get up and wander off are unable to find food, and eventually die, and if they are fortunate enough to get food and recover some of their strength, they are again utilised by the following sleighs, the horses of

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which are on their last legs ; therefore the poor animals are given little or no chance at all.

All along the line one sees horses standing by the side of the rails, thin, hungry, and weak, with a listless weary look in their eyes. A pat and a word of encouragement often rouse them sufficiently to enable them to walk off and nibble dried blades of grass sticking out of the snow on the side of the railway.

At 4 p.m. we arrived at Boordasskoe raziast, where we once more filled up sacks of snow and stuffed it into the tender. Although most stations have water columns for watering engines, there is either no water, or the water is frozen, so water columns are useless. Our engine is a poor kind of thing, and no wonder, since it has not been overhauled since goodness knows how long, and it was decided some days ago to reduce the load of our train by throwing some of the wagons off the rail over the embankment. We have shoved six wagons over the side up to now, and we are told that we have to empty our tiploska, as that is the next to go over the side. The occupants from other abandoned tiploskas have had to find accommodation in other wagons on the train, and we are arranging for our fellows from the tiploska to come into the car, and nine Persians will be accommodated along the train in Polish wagons.

December 29th.—We arrived at Etat this morning at 3 a.m. Some of us were up and dressed as we had been sneaking the engine during the night. We only stopped at this station till this evening, when we left, and at 11 p.m. arrived at Kushtan raziast, which is some 90 odd versts from Mariansk. All kinds of rumours are handed into our carriage by passing troops and Poles on our echelon. The rumours are unreliable, and it is very difficult to sift out the probable from the improbable. Russia is a terrible place for rumours, and some of the rumour "dope" served up is ridiculous in the extreme. This kind of "dope" has a far-off source, and like a river has a little clear spring (of truth) in the beginning, and gradually becomes a river of lies and exaggerations by the time it reaches the open sea represented in this metaphor by our ears. When will our train go on? This is the incessant question. Here is an example of a rumour:—

I

"I cannot swear that this "dope" is right,
But a sapper told me the other night,
That a Russian farmer who hogs our swill
Heard a lady from "up the hill"
Telling a fur-capped Russian cop
That a man who works in a vodka shop

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Met a fellow from Vladi Bay,
Who blew into town the other day,
Who got it straight from a Polish lad,
Whose sister, writing from Petrograd
Said that a Bolshevik leader there
Knew a fellow prepared to swear
That Trotsky heard from a German Jew
(Whom a Chinese coolie had told it to)
That a merchant down in the "Chink" bazaar
Heard from a lad who drives a car
For a banker's wife, around the town,
Who got it straight from a guy named Brown,
Who heard a chap in a Jap café
Say that he heard a Frenchman say
Our train would leave some time to-day."

RUMOUR No. 2.

"I wouldn't blame this on anyone,
But I've an idea, that a man named Smith
Heard a Captain called Bunkum say
That Slasher told him the other day
That MacNamara had heard, you see
From Dick who told it him privately,
That Mayton whispered in Freddy's ear
That Johnson said—though it sounded queer,
That Billington sitting in a chair
Had heard an infantryman declare
That he got it straight from the Lord knows where
That they charge ten roubles to cut your hair.

We left Etat Station and went on some 15 versts, where we came to a stop at Kashtan raziaat at 11 p.m.

In between these two stations the train pulled up and we uncoupled three tiploskas and by sheer force, without use of "lifting jacks" threw them down a steep embankment. One of the three tiploskas thus abandoned was ours. We took all the British out of the tiploska, and brought them into the car, together with one sick Persian. The other Persians decided to leave our train at the next station and jump echelons.

We sent for a doctor to see the sick Persian. The doctor, after examining the man, said he had a most contagious form of typhus. This meant that he would have to be isolated, so we got him into a disused brake-van for the time being, and covered him up with all the available blankets and rugs we could lay hands to.

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On arrival at this station we made enquiries as to whether there was a sanitary train in the yard. At 2 a.m. we found that there was one.

We had been giving the sick man hot coffee and looking after him all this time, as all his fellow countrymen left him to his fate. The Russians suggested dumping the man in the snow—it is unbelievable—but this suggestion had support from quite a number of Poles and Russians.

However S. and I got hold of the man, and we half carried him across lines in the dark some 200 yards to where a train was standing. We put him on to a snow heap and told him to stop there until we returned, and we went off to see the Commandant of the sanitary train. We knocked him up at 3.30 in the morning, and explained the whole case to him. He, at first, would have nothing to do with the case, but I gave him 5,000 roubles to pay for the man's expenses though he should have been taken free, and we went back for the Persian. As I said at the time, what other nation but ourselves would be doing all this for a foreigner who had been deserted by his friends and fellow-countrymen, at such a time like the present, when it was literally a case of everyone for himself, and the Reds take the hindermost.

The Persian expressed his deep gratitude to us for what we had done for him. We said good-bye to the man after seeing him comfortably installed in a warm hospital car. I don't think he has got typhus; he is only seedy, probably with malaria, as the weather is bitterly cold and any malaria in the system is very apt to show itself.

December 30th.—We arrived at Bagatol this morning at 5 a.m. This is a large station where there is an engine-changing depot. We are going to drop our dud engine here, and are taking on two new ones. Help! it's bad enough snowing, coaling and generally dancing attendance on one engine, but what is going to happen when we have two to tackle. Both the new engines required water and coal, so we had a busy morning doing the necessary. When one of these engines got the water three parts full, a leak was found, and it had to go back to the shed and empty its tender before the leak could be mended. The echelon Commander has fairly got the wind up. He is running round swearing and cursing, as persistent rumours arrive that the Reds have taken Etat, and are therefore some 35 versts behind us. The Adjutant of the train is down with typhus. The Polish soldiers are openly complaining against their officers on our echelon, as many echelons are passing ours, and this they attribute to the fact that the officers

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of other echelons are more energetic and capable men than the officers on our echelon, and therefore hustle their trains through stations.

We shall abandon the echelon and carry fellows who cannot trudge, but this is the last desperate resource.

We got ready and left Bagatol at 4.30 p.m., and did a quick run of 50 versts to a small raziast some 8 versts from Archensk, which is a fairly large station, but not so large as Bagatol.

We have put an extra 50 versts between ourselves and the Bolsheviks, and apparently they are some 85 to 100 versts away, so good night for the time being, Mr. Red. It is 11 p.m., and we are all very tired.

December 31st.—As we are still at this place, three of us walked in 8 versts to Archensk. There are nine trains standing between our train and the station on the same track, so it does not look as if we shall arrive into the station to-day.

We crossed the large bridge which is this side of Archensk. There is a very steep and awkward gradient from the bridge to the station, and the line makes an S curve into the station.

On arrival at the station we saw people from a train all pushing their train into the station. I have never seen a train pushed by its passengers before, and it was a queer sight to see men and women all walking along shoving the train, which was being slowly hauled along by a puffing, groaning engine.

On arrival at the station we found the station building in ruins. All the walls of the different offices were splashed with blood, and blood over the wrecked furniture. We asked a sentry on guard what had happened, and he said that eight wagons containing explosives standing opposite the station building had exploded whilst transshipping some sticks of dynamite. Some 500 people had been killed and 1,200 were wounded. We went to the scene of the explosion, and a terrible sight it was. Rails had been torn up, and every wagon and track near and around the spot where the eight wagons had exploded was totally wrecked. At the time of the explosion trains full of refugees were standing on tracks either side of the eight wagons, and everyone within a certain radius of these wagons had been blown to pieces. The explosion occurred three days ago, and in amongst the indescribable wreckage were sticking out human corpses, also arms and legs, all frozen stiff. Bodies which had been hurled some 30 yards away were still lying there with limbs and heads missing. Further down was a pile of poor fragments which had been collected. There was a high percentage of women amongst the victims, also children and babies. Enough of this—what struck us forcibly was the

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fact that a crowd was standing round the human corpses and fragments, viewing with apparent idle curiosity and indifference the spectacle of sorting the awful heap with a faint hope of identification. Officers and men who had passed through the worst horrors of France were not left unaffected by these sights, and yet the crowd present did not appear to be affected by anything but curiosity. The scenes one has seen during this great retreat of some 6,000 versts certainly do harden one to viewing gruesome sights without being sick or upset, but I don't think one's tender-heartedness is much affected.

CHAPTER VI

PRISONERS OF WAR

January 1st, 1920.—Our train remained outside Archensk for thirty hours, and we pulled in and only remained there a short time, and went on to Tooreteno, 22 versts, where we arrived at 7 p.m. A lot of Poles passed our echelon on foot, having abandoned their echelons. During the day, when the sun is shining, the scenery is perfectly lovely. Forests of fir-trees covered with snow, valleys, hills, and open country, and the change of scenery from the moving train are absolutely wonderful. Through the forests, and up hill and down dale, one sees a long line of moving sleighs, all the drivers urging the tired horses on in order to reach villages by night time. Nature's scenery is marred by distressing scenes. A lot of this distress is due to the fact that the people are all wild with terror at the thought of falling into the hands of the Bolsheviks.

January 2nd.—Same old routine, shovelling snow into the engine and pumping up water whenever we cross any stream. Officers and men often come into our car to warm up. We invariably give them some hot coffee or tea and, if required, something to eat before they go on. We have to be very careful of our supplies, as the Poles give us bread, etc., and there is not an unlimited supply by any means. For breakfast we always have slabs of bread and butter—luckily we bought three barrels of butter at Novo Nik—I really cannot imagine what would have happened without this butter. Dry bread is very hard to feed on. In the evening we have the one hot meal, usually soup—sometimes a stew—and it is much appreciated. We fried some meat, but as we have only a small tin stove which we fixed up at the end of the car, we can only fry very small quantities at a time. We, however, consider ourselves very lucky indeed to be getting what we are. Tobacco gave out a long time ago, and a cigarette is a sweet memory of the past.

At Bagatol we managed to buy some substitute for tobacco made from bark, also some Russian concoction which we stuff into our pipes and roll up in pieces of newspaper and puff away, but it has a bad effect on our throats, and coughing at night is freely indulged in—the coughing, of course, is aided by the fact that our feet are seldom dry.

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After snowing up the engine we get fairly covered with snow, which clings to our boots—being felt—and quickly thaws in the car and soaks through. But what's the odds, so long as one is 'appy, and throughout we are cheerful and there is no grouching. Good-natured chaff flies round most of the day. Thus our spirits are kept up, and the Russians and others think that we are a cheerful crowd, and like to come and see us. More than once we have been told that the British have a very sunny and cheerful disposition, but all is not honey when a wet foot steps on the ear of some person sleeping in the corridor or on the floor of the passage, and in the early morning five people trying to shave (yes, we shave whenever we can) and dress and wash in a single coupé one needs to have the patience of Job, and the temper of a cherub. Talking about washing, there are of course no lovely wash-basins with cold and hot water laid on. We get a basin of snow in from outside and wash in that; it is none too warm in the carriage, and a wash over in snow is, to say the least of it, bracing, and is freely indulged in. There is one great advantage in washing in snow, and that is the soap lathers very freely.

January 3rd.—We did 46 versts to-day, arriving at Kenchoog at 1 p.m.

A Colonel who was with the 1st Army, and an old friend of two liaison officers who are with us, came into the car. He said that the Reds are some 40 versts behind us. They attacked the station where his echelon was standing. He shot four of the enemy and dodged under some wagons and made off down the track.

He told us that the Cossacks who were billeted in the village close to the station sprang on their horses and bolted into the blue, lashing their ponies unmercifully in their anxiety to escape.

Nothing very exciting happened to-day; old game of feeding the engines. Our work is doubled owing to having two engines instead of one. The Poles told us they did not wish us to do any work on the engines after 11 p.m. at night, as they said we worked like Trojans during the day whenever work had to be done. Hooray! it will be nice to know that one can turn in without having to turn out into the biting cold at night, but we did not worry very much at the fact of having to turn out at nights.

January 4th.—We did 50 versts between 2 p.m. yesterday and 5.30 p.m. to-day. Jove, this is moving some; we shall have to put up our average in the "Sneaking Song." Fancy a train these days flying along at the rate of 50 versts in twenty-

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seven hours, about 1 mile per hour, and this being *double* the average we have been doing on most days. We arrived at Koyoolka raziast and are in a ribbon, so it looks as if we shall be here some hours. We had a sing-song this evening.

We have some officers and men with us who are unfit to do any walking or braving the bitter cold by jumping echelons, otherwise many of us would have left this wagon long ago. We could do about 80 to 100 versts a day by jumping echelons, instead of messing along like this. We hear that the Red Cross echelon containing the ladies passed this place three days ago. Thank goodness they are well ahead. We received two letters at Bagatol left by Captain M., informing us that we must not get ahead of the Poles, but keep with them as there is trouble at Krasnoyask.

We have decided to throw in our lot with the Poles if it comes to a fight. The enemy are expected to do one of two things, or possibly both; either catch us up from behind or to attack a station ahead of us, and so cut us off. If they come from behind we shall have to fight a rearguard action, and if they attack a station ahead we shall have to fight our way through.

There is no chance of a flank attack between stations as the snow on either side of the railway is too deep, and the beaten track has to be adhered to, besides which armed transport is continually streaming along by the side of the railway.

Captain M. is acting under the direct orders of the General, and if we jump echelons we shall get ahead of the Poles.

January 5th.—We arrived at Kaska station at 3.30 a.m., and after a stop of a few hours went on, arriving at Shayjnetsa raziast.

It is impossible to know where the Reds are, but it is calculated from what information can more or less be depended on, that they are some 45 versts behind us. We expect to be in at Krasnoyask to-morrow evening, and from thence get along more rapidly. Fighting is taking place in Krasnoyask, which is a large town, with a big station yard.

The Czechs who were at that station have all left. They have a large force, and all their echelons have left the place now. The Poles are in possession of the station, and they are running their echelons out quickly. The O.C. of our echelon says that we shall get a good run through Krasnoyask. He and other Polish officers are very sweet to us these days. They are all making for Vladivostock *en route* for their homes.

They don't quite know how they are going on from Vladivostock, but they have been told that there are only British

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ships there, and ask us if this is true, and we reply that undoubtedly there are British ships at Vladi. We understand now a little of their increased signs of friendliness and feeling of good cheer for us.

At one time they seriously contemplated cutting our car off, as it was too heavy, but at Bagatol the question of transport from Vladivostock to Poland cropped up, with the result that our wagon was taken from the rear of the train and put on in front, next to the engine.

We also hear that Tchicherin, a General with a force of some 20,000 troops has occupied Krasnoyask and is disarming the troops of the White Army on arrival at that place. The Poles told us that their people are in charge of the station, and that Tchicherin is top dog in the town, and the White troops are in possession of the outskirts of the town. The situation is very complicated. It appears that Tchicherin has come to an arrangement with the Poles that he will allow their echelons to pass through Krasnoyask, but that no Russian will be allowed through. It is said that Tchicherin is favourably disposed towards the British, so we expect to sail through with the Poles. Discussion on the situation waxes fast and furious, and we are all wondering very much what will happen when we arrive at Krasnoyask. Another rumour has it that Samianoff, with a force of some 50,000, is between Krasnoyask and Irkutsk, advancing along the line towards the former station. General Samianoff is at the head of the Cossacks, and is working in conjunction with the Japanese, who we know are at Irkutsk.

We heard some time back that Samianoff is disarming all the Czechs and Poles before allowing them to pass through the territory he guards, which is around Cheta. These rumours are very persistent, and come from all kinds of people, high and low, so it is very difficult to know what is happening. We shall know something definite when we arrive at Krasnoyask. At present the Poles all say, and others also, that Tchicherin is allowing the Poles through. Tchicherin is neither White nor Red; he is more inclined towards the Reds, but at present does not agree altogether with their policy; as the Poles and ourselves do not count in his aims and objectives, apparently he wants all such people out of his way, but also it seems that he does not intend to allow the White Army to pass Krasnoyask without disarming them.

January 6th.—We arrived at Meneno at 9.30 a.m., and are only 24 versts from Krasnoyask. We should be in Krasnoyask this evening all right. The track through the snow runs close to the railway, and a large number of sleighs come up to the

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railway embankment and travel along the railway. In doing so they throw the snow over the railway lines to such an extent that sometimes the rails are four or five inches under snow. This greatly hampers the train when starting, as the driving wheels will not grip the rails and simply fly round, while the old engines "cough" rapidly as if the train is travelling at 30 miles an hour.

When the train does start it has to travel cautiously, as all along the line sleighs are in the way. The Poles are now stopping the sleighs from travelling along the line, and hot arguments are the result. As the Poles are in full power and boss the situation, the sleighs have to give way, and the road ahead is clearer.

January 7th.—After leaving Meneno yesterday afternoon, a few of us were in the American coal wagon next to the engine just in front of our car, where we were resting after coaling the engine, when suddenly we heard a man on the embankment ahead shouting and waving a revolver. The train was travelling quite slowly at the time, and pulled up. We got off the coal wagon and went into our wagon and told our fellows to come out and watch the fun, as one of Tchicherin's men was holding up all the Russian transports, and disarming them all before allowing them into Krasnoyarsk. In a few minutes we were all out on the track, and we went up to where the hold-up was taking place, and we saw every occupant of the sleighs giving up his arms. As soon as the first sleigh came to a stand, all the long line of sleighs following, together with a large body of Cossack cavalry, came to a stand. When the word was passed down that everyone was being disarmed, we saw soldiers flinging away their arms and officers hurriedly taking off their belts, to which their revolvers were strapped, and flinging them away into the snow. Some of the officers who were mounted broke their revolvers on their saddle horns and flung their revolvers and ammunition into the snow. On the left of the line, about 2 versts away, we noticed rapid movements of cavalry, and heard firing, and could not make out what was happening.

We picked up some splendid Cossack sabres, beautifully ornamental, and carried them back to our carriage as souvenirs, and soon were hunting amongst the heaps of arms and equipment in the snow for other good souvenirs. The disarming went on until nightfall. After the process the troops were allowed to proceed on to Krasnoyarsk, which was some 8 versts away. The O.C. of our train sent a man into Krasnoyarsk as soon as the hold-up took place, to get permission for our train

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to proceed to Krasnoyarsk. The man came back about 7 p.m. and said that permission had been given.

The O.C. then placed a Polish flag on the engine. It was yellow and red, the Bolsheviks tore the yellow half off and left a red flag only.

We were having supper about this time, when a soldier with a large red cockade in his fur cap came into our carriage and asked us who we were. We replied that we were members of the British Mission. We asked him what was happening in Krasnoyarsk, and what Tchicherin was doing. He replied by asking us who Tchicherin was, as he had never heard of Tchicherin, and in reply to our question said that he was not one of Tchicherin's men at all, but a soldier of the Soviet Army. In a flash we saw that we were captured by the "pukka" Reds. Just at this point a battalion commander and a representative of the civil side of the Soviet Government came in and began talking to us. They said they were hungry, and could we give them anything to eat. We told them they could help themselves to some cups of coffee which were on the little table in the coupé, and again asked them who they were, as we could not believe they were the real Reds, and that we were captured by the Bolsheviks, but that they were simply members of Tchicherin's Army, which we knew were in the vicinity and were disarming the White troops entering Krasnoyarsk.

Their replies left us in no doubt whatsoever that we were captured by the Reds we had been keeping ahead of. In answer to our questions they said that they had been travelling at the rate of 80 to 100 versts a day through the famous Tiaga forest, a marvellous feat. Many had been jumping echelons disguised as White troops, and the rest had come along on sleighs. As they were dressed exactly like the White troops, with the exception of red ribbons in their caps and on their coats, it was a simple matter for them to pass as White troops. They had also made a very large encircling movement, and had cut round us. *Four days ago they occupied Krasnoyarsk.*

An order was given to the Poles to put all their arms and ammunition into a wagon on the train, which was placed under a guard. The Reds told us that we could keep our arms and that we would not be disarmed, and then went away after thanking us for the coffee.

We still could not believe or realise that we were in the hands of the real Reds, and could not make out the situation at all.

There was no firing going on outside at all. We went out and all the transports and troops, thousands of them, were laying down their arms and proceeding on their way to Krasnoyarsk.

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Later on another Red came into our carriage and he sat down and chatted to us. I noticed a fresh clot of blood on his sleeve, and he held his revolver on his lap ready for action.

He told us that the world would be at peace as soon as the workmen of England and France joined the Bolshevik movement, and told us that he would bring us some Bolshevik literature and newspapers for us to read, so that we would understand what Bolshevism really meant.

He cleared off, and we discussed the situation. One or two were for making off down the track to Krasnoyarsk, and by passing through the station to get on to some train the other side of Krasnoyarsk. The Reds had told us that they had been in Krasnoyarsk four days, and all along the railway line from our echelon to the station they had guards with machine guns, but that if we wished we could walk into Krasnoyarsk. Some officers with us have lived in Russia some years, and they expressed the opinion that there was such a panic in Krasnoyarsk that it would be most dangerous to venture into the town, besides which the Reds would stop people along the line, and during the darkness would not hesitate to kill for the sake of an overcoat or good clothes ; besides which the Reds must be guarding the railway the other side of the station, and they most certainly would not let anyone pass.

As the railway was the only way open to us, it was decided that it would be useless to attempt to get through, and it would be best to wait until morning and see how the land lay. After further discussion and enquiries from Red soldiers outside the carriage, we resolved to remain. We were promised by the Poles on our train that they would put up a fight as there were many Polish echelons behind us, including a Polish armoured train—but the Poles on our echelon have given up their arms, and have thoroughly let us down. Nothing else to do, so we turned in, but did not undress in case we should have to get busy suddenly.

This morning some more Red soldiers paid us a visit, they were all exceedingly nice to us, and chatted in a very friendly way. We cannot make it out at all. It may be that the front line troops have instructions to treat prisoners well in order to stop panic, which would make things difficult for them, and that the real fun will start when the others come along. We cannot understand their not disarming us. From what we can gather only a very few Red troops in comparison with the vast numbers of White troops are in the vicinity of Krasnoyarsk ; yet thousands of Russian troops of all arms, and Poles also, have been disarmed without a shot being fired. A Red told us that





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the only person who had been shot was a Russian officer who was told to give up his arms. He gave up a rifle and revolver, and when asked if he had anything else in the way of arms, said he had not. When they searched him, a Browning pistol was found in his hip pocket, so they shot him on the spot. The Reds tell us that they have orders that there is to be no killing, but all the same we have an uncomfortable feeling that we are in for it sooner or later.

It is difficult to know what to do. It is absolutely and utterly impossible to escape into the forest as the snow is too deep, and there is nowhere to go to, even if it were not, and as the railway line is the only way, and that is strongly guarded, we are perfectly safe prisoners, and the Reds know it, and hence don't trouble to put a guard over us. We have torn up all our papers, but I, after due consideration, am going to keep this diary and risk the danger of keeping it, as there is nothing very incriminating in it, and the Reds are not going to bother about books, their only interest is in clothes, foodstuffs, and valuables. One Red told us that a very strict order was out against looting, and that any soldier caught looting is summarily shot.

Well, I wonder what to-morrow will bring forth. We expect a visit from a Commissar, a Commissar being the local top dog, and one is attached to each battalion. It is getting late, and it has been an exciting day, and will probably be more exciting to-morrow—perhaps there won't be a to-morrow—damnation take it, we being caught in this sickening way—anything would be better than sitting here, and waiting for goodness only knows what—up and doing every time, anything but this suspense.

January 8th.—Nothing startling happened to-day. A few Red soldiers came into our carriage, simply for the purpose of warming themselves, and on finding we were English, conversed with us. They said that all English and French workmen would soon become Bolsheviks, and one lad said he would bring us some Bolshevik propaganda to-morrow. We told him we would be very much interested to read such literature. The Poles gave us food as usual. They are very down in the mouth. They have played Old Harry along the line, and now are very much afraid of the consequences. They all seem to think that the British will be all right, and are anxious to keep on the right side of us, judging from the vast amount of attention and extra consideration we have received from them since our capture. They cannot, and neither can we, understand why our arms have been left with us when everyone else has been disarmed. We feel sure that sooner or later our arms will be taken away

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from us. We are also unable to account for the fact that no killing is going on. After the wave has passed, the powers that be will come along and settle the hash of us all.

We heard some time ago that the Reds have completely changed their policy of wholesale slaughter and have considerably toned down their methods of dealing with their enemies. From what we have seen of the Red Army up to now, the discipline is very much better and stricter than that of the White Army.

January 9th.—We heard that all the Polish echelons which had got past Krasnoyarsk have been captured. It would not, therefore, have been any use attempting to get through Krasnoyarsk on the night we were captured, and making East by jumping echelons, as there would have been no echelons to jump.

We were also told that there was a French officer in an echelon some four versts behind us. Two of us went off to try and find him. On our way down the line we noticed many of the Poles wearing red ribbons in their coats and hats. I don't think that little wheeze is going to do them any good. We found the French officer on a Polish echelon. He was delighted to see us, and said he had been to the town and had seen the authorities there. He asked us to keep in touch with him, and he promised to come and see us this evening.

This evening some more Red soldiers came into our car.

■ An armoured train drew up alongside our carriage, and some men said they would take all our arms. We told them that they could do so if they wished to, but that a Battalion Commander said we could keep them. They replied that they had orders to disarm everyone, and as they knew nothing about us, they would include us in their orders.

They then collected our rifles and revolvers, and all ammunition, and also took my Lewis gun and ammunition away. I was very sorry to part with the gun as it was the one which was in the aeroplane I did trips in, and was given me by my pilot, who took the gun away with him when the 'plane was destroyed, and he handed me the gun at Mariansk when our echelon passed his. Having collected our arms, the Reds departed.

Captain P. produced his guitar, and we had a sing-song to celebrate the occasion. We all have a fishy feeling that the future is not going to be bright. Visions of the County Gaol loom up now and again, and playful references to firing parties and other pleasantries are bandied about. In Moscow we hear some British had a thin time of it, some being killed in the early stages of the Revolution.

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We have an idea that the Reds do not love us, and they have funny ways of dealing with those they don't love.

We cannot understand being left alone like this, and have decided that two of us should go into the town to-morrow morning and see the town Commissar.

We went to the station office this morning and spoke to the local Commandant. He said we could go into the town. The French officer paid us a visit, and had a long talk with us.

January 10th.—Four of us went into the town, and after some difficulty found the man we were after. We were coldly received, but were civilly and politely dealt with, and this was much more than we expected. We were given papers permitting us to retain our kit, and were given orders and authority to live in the town. We returned to our carriage, having tramped about 20 versts. When in the town we managed to find a café where we had some soup and meat and potatoes. The café was a small one, crowded with all kinds of people, principally of the working class. Everyone was in a more or less excited state, and the majority of people wore red pieces of cloth either in their coats or hats. It was quite obvious that many of these "Reds" were former Whites, and as a sort of protection put up "red."

There were very many soldiers in the streets. All former officers of the White Army had taken off their epaulettes, as there is no such thing as a badge of rank on the shoulder now. The Town Commissar told us that we had better take off our shoulder straps, not so much because they objected to it, as for the sake of our own comfort and safety, as they said that our shoulder badges would attract attention, and at the present moment there were crowds of fanatics about who would be quick to create a disturbance if they saw us with shoulder badges on. This proved to be true, as four of us at different times were accosted by Red soldiers who asked us what we meant by wearing shoulder badges, and one Red Cossack on horseback offered to cut them off with his sword. The offer was declined, and on returning to our carriage we took our shoulder straps off. We recognised several officers of the White Army whom we knew, and they were very much pleased to see us. Not a single shoulder strap was to be seen anywhere. It was a strict order by the Red Army that no shoulder straps were to be worn, and the order was carried out to the letter. The greater part of the White Army had been captured in Krasnoyarsk, and all the thousands of the horses belonging to this army were in and around Krasnoyarsk, many wandering about in the outskirts of the town, and also in the streets. As can be

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imagined, they are in a terrible condition, and everywhere can be seen horses lying down through sheer exhaustion. Their coats are covered with thick frost, and as there is no fodder for them, and no one to attend to them, the poor brutes are dying in large numbers daily.

January 11th.—Two of our fellows went into the town this morning to arrange for quarters. While they were on the platform, a man came up to them and asked them if they were English. On replying that they were, he said he was an Englishman also, and had come from Ekaterinburg. He said that there was room for us all in the house he was staying in. This was indeed a stroke of luck for us, as every available quarter was full to overflowing, and we should have experienced great difficulty in finding quarters, in spite of the fact that the Housing Committee had deputed one of their men to find billets for us.

We had expected to be sent to the laager where all the officers of the White Army were told to report.

The laager had been used to accommodate the German and Austrian prisoners of war, and holds about 10,000 men. We were agreeably surprised to find we should be housed in the town instead of the "Viona Gorodock," as the war prison camp is called. After our fellows left the wagon this morning for the town, a Red Commandant came to our car and informed us that we should have to leave the car at once. We told him that the Town Committee had given us papers ordering accommodation in the town, and that to-morrow we would go into the town.

We also told the Station Commandant that we will be leaving the car to-morrow and have a paper in our possession allowing us to retain our kit. He replied that after inspecting our baggage we could go.

The Englishman who met us on the platform told us that he would arrange for sleighs for us.

The Town Committee informed us that our interpreters would not be allowed to accompany us, and that they must report themselves to the Committee for orders. Luckily we have one officer with us who speaks Russian well, and also a sergeant interpreter, besides which most of us can carry on simple conversation, so that the loss of our interpreter is not a serious matter at all.

January 12th.—At ten o'clock this morning the Commandant sent his man to go through the luggage. He minutely examined everything, and then gave us a clearance certificate, allowing us to depart. After he cleared off a gang of roughs came round and asked us to give them some of our stuff. Whilst they were

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round us the sleighs turned up, and we commenced loading up our stuff on to the sleighs. The crowd of Reds of the worst kind tried to take different articles of clothing from the sleighs, and when prevented from doing so, became very threatening and said they would send for their Commissar, and he would strip us of everything we had. We replied that our baggage had been examined and that we had papers from the Town Committee allowing us to retain our kit. They became insulting, and said that we had helped the White troops, and that they would take our kit. We knew that a strict order had been issued prohibiting looting, and that any soldier caught looting would be shot, so we sent for the Station Commandant. After some ten minutes the man who had examined our kit turned up, and the crowd began to melt away. He went for them like a good one, and a hot argument took place. He told the crowd that if they had anything to say they had better accompany him to the Commandant. Whilst the argument raged we started the sleighs and left them to it. On our way to the town we were stopped a few times by Reds, who on seeing our papers allowed us to pass. All along the road we saw dead and dying horses, and groups of them herded together simply standing, numbed with cold, and without food. It will be only a matter of a few hours before they lie down never to get up again.

Our billet was situated at the other end of the town, on the banks of the Yenesei River, and it took us an hour and a half to arrive there. The town was crowded with Red troops, but we did not attract the attention we expected to, and we arrived at the house without mishap.

There were two rooms into which we bundled our things. The room was built to accommodate troops, and had sleeping shelves. We soon got our kit on to the shelves, and the three Chinamen who had accompanied us throughout the journey and had been officer's servants with the British Mission for many months, soon got a fire going in a small brick stove, and dished us up some tea.

We retired to bed fairly early, as we were all very tired.

January 13th.—This morning Captain Horrocks went to the Town Commandant to get an order for each one of us, allowing us to live in the town and go about in the streets. H. was unable to obtain an interview, and was told to go again tomorrow.

We are told that Omsk roubles are not accepted in the town. Our sleighs yesterday, five of them, cost us 25,000 roubles, just to take our stuff from the carriage to our house. This wicked price was due to the fact that rumour had it that the Omsk

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rouble would be useless. It's a rotten situation. We have very little except Omsk roubles, and the Lord knows how we are going to carry on. We luckily were given 500 yen which we may be able to turn into Soviet roubles, also some of us have some Kerenski and Romanoff roubles, also a few American dollar notes.

The money situation is going to be very serious for us unless we can raise the wind somehow.

All Russian and Polish officers, and also men of the latter nationality, have been sent to the laager, and we hear that some batches of people have been taken out and shot.

We also heard to-day that four of our officers, Colonel J. and party, who were captured at Tiaga, have been shot. It is supposed that they were there when the fight took place between the Poles and the Reds, and as our people were armed and undoubtedly took part in any scrap, they were laid out to a man. If they were not killed in the scrapping but were shot after they were captured, then it is a poor look-out for us.

We all have a sneaking feeling, I think, that it's a question of time only. Had the Poles who were with us fought we should have joined them, as we decided to fight our way through with the Poles in case it came to that state, but as circumstances turned out we were captured before we realised that the Reds were anywhere near us, and the Poles surrendered before they were even invited to do so.

January 14th.—Captain H. went to the Committee and got an order for each one of us to walk about in the town and be out of doors until ten o'clock at night. The pass refers to us as "ex-Major," "ex-Captain," "ex-Lieutenant," etc. The Reds evidently don't recognise any description of rank. There are posters out in the streets forbidding anyone to go about unless he has a pass, so we all had to stay in except Captain H. until he returned with the passports. Before leaving our carriage, I divided up all the Omsk roubles I had in my possession belonging to the Mission, in order to avoid losing everything in the event of our being searched. If all the money was found on me, the chances are that I should have been relieved of a good percentage of it, but if each one had only a limited amount in his possession the chances were better that more of the money would be left us. Up to now we have not been searched.

We bought some provisions to-day at the market. The stuff is frightfully dear, and the money we have got is not going to last long. The Omsk rouble is annulled, so all our Omsk money is mere waste-paper.

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January 15th.—Some of our fellows took some kit to the market and sold it. The money realised will carry us on for a few days. The market square is thronged with all kinds of people selling every imaginable kind of article. All the White Army, and the people who had been on the side of the Whites, and the thousands of refugees captured in Krasnoyarsk have scarcely any money other than Kolchak roubles, and everyone is therefore in a very bad way indeed, and is forced to take his belongings to the market in order to get hold of current money. There is very little Soviet money in the town at present, and as a result people have to obtain foodstuff by exchanging articles of clothing and valuables.

January 16th.—Nothing very fresh happening just now. We hear that the Polish echelons were all captured, and crowds of Polish troops are being brought under escort into the town and put into the laager. The entire White Army and all the Poles have been disarmed and taken prisoners, and the quantity of war material is something enormous.

Twenty motor cars were captured in Krasnoyarsk. Armoured trains, guns, and rifles by the thousands are being brought into Krasnoyarsk. The Polish armoured train at Tiaga put up a very stiff fight before it was captured, and both sides tell us that the slaughter of Reds who took part in the capture of the train was very heavy.

We wonder what is going to happen to us. Batches of prisoners are, we are informed, taken from the laager, and are being shot. The streets are full of Red troops, and everywhere are lying dead and dying horses.

The dogs are feasting on the dead horses in the streets, and other sights are too revolting to record.

The weather is bitterly cold, 74 degs. of frost. One cannot stay out of doors very long, and our fur caps have to be pulled well down over our ears, and our sheepskin coats are insufficient to keep out the cold. The air is so cold that breathing is sometimes painful, and we put mufflers over our mouths and noses. One or two of our fellows have had their noses and cheeks and ears frostbitten, but they are one and all rubbed with snow over the frozen parts, and barring blisters and scabs have healed up without leaving a trace. I hope this severe weather will not last very long.

Two of us went to see the local head of the Revolutionary Committee with the object of getting some money.

He received us in a very hostile spirit, and said that seven times had the British Government been asked to recognise Soviet Russia, and they had refused, and he therefore did not

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wish to have anything to do with us, and as far as he was concerned we did not exist, and would give us no money. This means we can all starve so far as he is concerned. Cheerful lad he is, indeed! After some more conversation, he said he would think the matter over. He was a real fanatic, and we need not waste our time looking for help from him.

January 17th.—We have got our small cooking stove going. Our three Chinks are doing splendidly. We are on rations as we have to go carefully with our food and money. Our breakfast consists of tea without milk, and bread and butter.

The Town Committee have given us bread tickets, and we take turns to stand in a queue for bread. The bread is the Russian coarse bread, but goes down all right. We luckily had a good supply of butter on the train, and we managed to bring it away with us, so that the butter will last some time. For lunch we have a stew, and for supper baked potatoes, or "khassa," which consists of all kinds of stuff; barley, rice, and other grain boiled can pass as khassa. Our sugar is not going to last long, and we shall soon be drinking tea without milk or sugar.

To-day two of us went to see the Danish Consul. We had met him before, while travelling from Tiaga. He had been compelled to leave his carriage, and we came across him travelling in a tiploska. There are some thirty Danish subjects captured here. The Consul was also captured at Krasnoyask. They are staying in a flat, the one above the flat which had belonged to the British Consul, who left Krasnoyask in plenty of time to avoid capture. The Danes are very down in the mouth. Although they are neutrals they are not recognised by the Reds, and the Consul has been told that Consuls are not recognised. They are in a bad way so far as money is concerned, but are infinitely better off in every way than we are. They are living in luxurious quarters and have heaps of good foodstuffs to fall back upon. They were very pleased to see us, and we had a long chat with them.

January 18th.—More people have come into the house, some are filthy-looking individuals, and it looks as if unwelcome visitors will undoubtedly pay us attention sooner or later.

Some people who knew us, hearing that we were in Krasnoyask, found out our address and came to see us. They were in a bad way and without money, and they do not know what is to happen to them. One man, a Czech, and his wife, came this evening. The lady was in a dreadful state. The Czechs are fighting against the Red Army west of this place, and as the Reds have many old scores to pay off against the Czechs,

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there is a grave danger that the man will be shot if it is discovered who he is. He was a Commandant of an important town (Ekaterinburg), and is now passing under an assumed name, and chopping up wood and doing menial work at a house where Red soldiers are staying.

The man's wife suggested that we should take her husband under our wing and say that he was an English soldier, but as he cannot speak a word of English, the suggestion could not be entertained. The lady was absolutely petrified with terror on account of her husband. She was very young and extremely pretty, and we felt very sorry to see beauty in distress, and wished very much that we could help the man in any way. A Commissar told me this morning that an order had been received from Moscow that no more persons are to be shot out of hand. We comforted the lady and her husband as much as we could, and they left us in a more cheerful spirit than when they came. Their entry was very peculiar. The lady came creeping into our room, and after ascertaining that only English were present, went out again and fetched her husband in. The way the woman carried on the whole time was pitiful, and we all considered that she was bound sooner or later to give her husband away.

January 19th.—Nothing very exciting happened. Some of the fellows went to the bazaar and sold some more of our clothing. We have baggage belonging to people who left our car and went on ahead. As they are not likely to see their baggage again owing to the fact that the Reds are confiscating such stuff, we shall sell it if we are put to it.

The dead horses are being removed from the streets, and an order has been issued that no one is allowed to wear Red unless they were in the Red Army, or with the Bolsheviks previous to their capturing Krasnoyarsk.

There is, in consequence, far less red to be seen in the streets, the persons privileged to wear red, mainly soldiers, have passed through this town on their way to the Front.

We are told that all the Poles captured will be made to work on the railway in clearing up the filth and snow, and batches will be sent to the notorious Siberian mines.

Russian officers who were in the laager have been let out with passes, and some who knew us in the old days came to see us. They tell us that batches of officers leave the laager under an armed guard, and do not return. Their dead bodies have been found on the ice of the Yenesei River, all having been shot.

We are beginning to think that we will not be juggled after

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all. For the first week after being captured we thought there was a very good chance of our having to face a firing party, and that unpleasant feeling has now passed. We do not now think we are going to be done in. If we are, I hope some of our letters which we have given to Russian friends with the object of eventually getting the details of our exit, will reach the proper authorities at home. I will also hand this diary over to some trusted pal, and thus will a tale be unfolded.

January 20th.—We have been wondering all along whether the people we put into the Red Cross train have got away or not. From different sources we have heard that the train has been captured, and is 13 versts down the line. This morning two of our men saw two of the ladies, wives of British subjects, whom we had put on the Red Cross train, and from the ladies we discovered that the train had been captured some considerable distance down the line, and had been eventually brought back to Krasnoyarsk. Mr. and Mrs. B. and one lady took to sledges and caught up the Czech echelons, and have got away, but the remainder are still on the Red Cross train. To-morrow we will get full details from them.

The two ladies in question were far too excited on meeting their husbands safe and sound to give us any details. Several people in the town whom we have become acquainted with since our capture, are only too willing to help us in any way they can. We were introduced to a Jew with the object of cashing English cheques. He offered us 35 roubles to the pound. Before being captured we could get about 6,000 to 10,000 Omsk roubles to the pound, and as the present rate is about 750 roubles (Soviet) to the English pound, we parted suddenly with friend Jew. He must have come from a very low district in Palestine.

January 21st.—We met the rest of our people from the Red Cross train. Some of them were under the impression that we had been done in, and are very glad to find us all alive and kicking. We got details of how they were captured. They suffered no indignities; the men were disarmed, and the Americans on the train tell us that nothing very exciting occurred. We went to the station to see the American Engineers. They gave us a very cold reception, as they are under the impression that the British are in very bad odour with the Reds, and they do not wish the Reds to think that they are in any way associated with us. They have not left their car since being captured.

Went up to see the Danish Consul again this morning, and he has no news. Two Americans were there. They both shook us cordially by the hand, and the Colonel told me that

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they had wired to Omsk and offered to work for the Reds in the same capacity as they had worked for the Whites. The Colonel went on to say that their offer had been accepted, and the eight American Engineers were leaving for Tomsk. The Colonel offered to help us in any way he could by getting us money or getting us jobs. I thanked him, but gave him distinctly to understand that in no circumstances would any member of the British Mission accept any kind of work whatsoever under the Reds. He was taken back somewhat by my answer, and shortly afterwards said good-bye, and left. The Consul was very free with his opinion of the poor representatives of America.

This evening at eight o'clock, after dinner, two Americans came to our house from the station, which is about 3 versts away, and asked for us. They would not come in, and said that they had come up to inform us that they were going to Tomsk to work for the Reds under protest, as their Colonel had ordered them to do this, and they wished the British to know that they were not working for the Reds of their own free will, but because they had been ordered by their Colonel to do so. It was absolutely immaterial to us what they did, and moreover it did not even interest us, but we told them that whatever happened we would not work for the Reds.

January 22nd.—The people from the Red Cross train are trying to get accommodation in the town. The town is chock full to overflowing and getting a room is a very difficult thing indeed. Almost every day Red soldiers come into our rooms to see whether any more men can be stuffed in with us, but they see we are too crowded as it is, besides which we hold an authority from the Housing Committee in the town to occupy two rooms in this house.

We are still on rations and are invariably hungry. We are reduced to tea without milk and sugar, but this is not a very great hardship. The meals themselves are too little to satisfy good appetites, and we fill up the odd empty corners with chunks of bread and butter. Not much happened to-day. All kinds of rumours about what is happening on the Front, east of this place.

We have thoroughly examined maps and weighed up prospects of making our escape. The river is frozen and the ships in the harbour, some three versts down stream, are frozen in, of course, and won't move for months. It is hopeless during the winter to get anywhere, as it is impossible during this severe weather to live a night in the open. We wish we could get to Irkutsk, which is a large town about 400 versts east of here. Irkutsk is

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only some 200 versts from the border of Manchuria and it would not be impossible to get away out of Russia from Irkutsk. Other ways of escape have all been considered and discussed with people who know the country like a book, and there is no prospect of getting out. We are as safe from escape as if we were locked up in a strong prison. When the weather gets warmer there is a chance, and certainly hopes in the spring and summer of escaping, but a lot may happen before then.

January 23rd.—We saw all kinds of Commissars to-day about money, but “nothing doing.” Some are polite and nice, others just the reverse. We are daily obliged to sell our things in the bazaar. We all had a bath the other day in a Russian bath. Our house is very filthy and filthy people are daily coming in to stay in place of those finding other quarters. Red soldiers come in and sit on our bunks. Of course, we have no such things as tables or chairs or any other kind of furniture. We hold our plates in our laps and sit on our wooden bunks. It is horribly hard lying on boards with a blanket for a mattress, but we sleep soundly enough for all that. The strain is beginning to tell. We have had a continuous mental and physical strain now since the beginning of November, and what with the want of proper and sufficient food, are not looking the picture of health. However, we are all very cheerful and have regular sing-songs in the evenings to the accompaniment of the banjo-guitar. Our neighbours like our singing, and we sing certain songs by special request, “Tipperary” being quite a favourite with the Russians. They all say they thoroughly appreciate our lively and cheerful songs—they are certainly cheerful compared with Russian music, which, as a rule, savours of a dirge.

January 24th.—Every day seems the same. The air is full of rumours, some good, the majority the reverse. It is said that Irkutsk has turned “Red” and the town has been captured by the local Bolsheviks. The Czechs are fighting. They are making for Vladivostock. The Reds are pressing them, and the Czechs have been obliged to abandon many of their echelons and fight a rear-guard action in order to enable the majority of their echelon and personnel to get away east. The weather is still very cold indeed, and the temperature is about 70 degs. of frost. When a wind is blowing, it is too cold to remain out-of-doors long. The streets are full of notices telling people what they may or must not do. There is very little Soviet money in the town and everyone is very hard-up for money. The market place is a sight. Well-dressed men and women selling their personal property and valuables, and hawking anything they can raise money on. Valuables are going for a song. Rich furs,

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lovely stoles, etc., are dirt cheap, if anyone had money and bought these things, their fortune could be made. There are many Jews in the town. They have got Kerenski and Romanoff money, and they are doing a roaring trade. Some of them have been to see us and have made offers for what foreign money we possess. The offers, however, are so low that we have decided to carry on with what we have got before parting with dollars and yen at ridiculous and ruinous exchanges.

The dead horses are still lying about in the streets and very many are on the ice on the Yenesei, just lying where they strayed and died. The dogs are eating the carcasses, and the majority of the poor gees have had their tails cut off on account of the hair. In a yard near the station the dead horses are being collected and skinned. Pigs are having the time of their lives in this yard.

Meat is getting very scarce and the price is now almost beyond our means. Horse meat is being sold and this will be the only meat we shall be likely to obtain in the near future.

January 25th.—The weather has turned a little warmer, thank goodness. It is now only 45 degs. of frost. The people from the Red Cross train have been told they will have to leave the train and go into the town. The difficulty of getting accommodation is very great, but somehow or other we hope to manage to help them to do so. The Poles have been put to work on the railway. They are digging with pick-axes the frozen filth, and shovelling it into trucks which are taken away out of the town.

For many months past thousands upon thousands of refugees have used the railway yards as latrines. During the bitter cold weather everyone living in wagons has had to get out and use the station yards and railway generally as latrines. Imagine what the result is. During the winter this effect is bad enough; try and imagine what the result will be when a thaw sets in. It is inconceivable, the discomfort ladies and children are put to during the extreme bitter weather, having to get out of wagons at all hours of the day and night, mostly during the night, to perform all their ablutions. For the men it is bad enough; for the gentler sex and children, enough said. Hundreds have died on the journey and it is a common sight to see corpses stacked on the platforms of a brake van or in open wagons. To-day I saw the corpse of a pretty girl of about eighteen, lying on some planks between the buffers of two wagons. I don't know how long she had been dead. She was frozen stiff and snow-white, and had no covering in the way of clothing to speak of. I wonder how much longer she will be left there, poor thing.

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This is nothing out of the ordinary, such sights scarcely attract attention. We would not believe such things were possible if we did not daily see them with our own eyes. In Russia, the dead are not put into closed coffins, but in coffins without the lid on, and are carried along the streets even in normal times exposed to the public gaze.

Every day ordinary luggage sleighs go along the main streets with open cases crammed with nude, snow white corpses. These are put into cold storage until the ground thaws. There is nothing but death in this town, and this town is the same as other towns in Siberia at present. Typhus has broken out long ago, and hundreds are dying daily. The laager is a death trap. There are about 30,000 men in the laager. The corpses are stacked in a barn. Officers, friends of ours, who came from the laager, tell us that every morning when they wake up there are two or three dead in their room. The Commandant of the laager came in the other day and ordered some Russian officers to get ropes in order to drag out the dead from the different rooms. The victims had died from typhus, and in order to avoid handling them ropes were put round them, and they were hoisted off to the barn. Theatres and cinemas, run by the Reds are in full swing. None of us have been to them, we have too many troubles to contend with to find time for amusements, even if we had the money to indulge in them. We tendered a telegram to-day to the local authorities, addressed to the War Office, London, giving all our names and saying we are badly put to it for money. This is the fourth telegram we have tried to get off. We gave one to the Danish and Swedish Consuls, and also to the Red Cross representative some time ago, but as neither are recognised we very much doubt whether anything will come of it. Our telegram was accepted by the local authorities and we were promised that it would be duly despatched. I hope sincerely that it will.

January 26th.—The Americans paid us a visit this morning. They got as far as Tiaga, when some high official returned them to Krasnoyarsk. They want to form an Allied Committee to interview the Red authorities. We don't follow their reasonings at all, and as their ideas of things are quite different from ours, I don't think the Committee will materialise. However, they got the Danes to attend a meeting. Two of us attended, and we listened to twaddle for a couple of hours. We find that a bigwig has arrived in Krasnoyarsk from Moscow, and is living in his saloon at this station. We have arranged an interview with him to-morrow, and I hope some good will come of it.

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To Troopers
London.

You are not
detained on
but ~~the~~ account
of the Soviet
Gov. please correct
MMS

Following British Personnel
detained in Krasnoyarsk by
Soviet Government urgently in need
of money please arrange credit.

Major Vining

Captains Horrocks, Hayes, Macbullaugh, Pickett.

Lieutenants E. J. Stephens, Dempster, Byford.

R. S. M. Walters, S. M. Macmillan

Sergeants Rooney, Illingworth, Liblington.

Private James, Sapper Smith

also British Civilians R. A. Purvis
British Corporation.

William Yates, Ernest Yates, Lydia Yates

Twerton Parsonage.

Vining.

28/1/20
British Railway Mission
Siberia

COPY OF MAJOR VINING'S TELEGRAM TO THE WAR OFFICE, SHOWING THE
SOVIET GOVERNMENT'S ANNOTATION.

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The Danes are fed up with the Americans, and are not over anxious to have any truck with them.

January 27th.—This afternoon we went to see "Tavarish" S. in his saloon at the station. He received us very politely. S. spoke fluent English, and listened to everything we had to say. He fully agreed with us that it was necessary that we should have money, and said he would see what he could do in the matter. He explained to us that there was little or no money to spare in the town, and that money was expected from Moscow. He, however, promised to make enquiries from the town authorities, and to let us know how much could be spared for the Americans, ourselves, and the Danes, on whose behalf we also spoke. Whilst we were on the subject he said that it would be necessary for us to draw up a document acknowledging on behalf of the Mission the receipt of a loan from the Soviet Government. He also informed us that England had raised the blockade, and that shortly there would be a working understanding between England and Soviet Russia as a result of the Copenhagen Conference held between Mr. MacGrady on behalf of England, and Russian delegates. He wished us a cordial farewell as it were, and we returned home considerably cheered up, and at once drew up and got the important document ready.*

January 28th.—Two of us went down to the station and interviewed S.'s secretary. We were given 10,000 roubles, and the Americans and Danes 20,000, as they are a bigger party than we are. All kinds of rumours regarding the Eastern Front where the Czechs are fighting fiercely, and are destroying the railway bridges and line between here and Irkutsk. S. said he would send off a telegram if we wrote one out. So we wrote a wire giving all the names of the members, military and civil people of our party, and saying we badly required money, and were detained by the Soviet Government in Krasnoyarsk. S. would not pass the wire as it stood, and with a red pencil put a circle round the word "detained," and wrote across our telegram we were not detained by the Soviet Government (but on account)—(crossed out)—"but you" (also crossed out)—"please correct." I have kept this document. S. promised that our wire would be sent to England. We had received information some days ago that an officer of the White Army had seen four British officers shot on the platform at Tiaga. He described the officers, and we felt without doubt that our

* This document, in original with Commissar Svedelov's remarks, is in my possession. Commissar Svedelov, brother of the famous Svedelov, is the Minister of Ways and Communications.

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four officers had been shot. The Americans also told us that they had heard the same thing, so that from four entirely different sources we heard that four British officers were lying dead on Tiaga platform. We felt sick to think that uselessly four of our fellows were killed. We asked S. for news of these four officers, and he informed us that when he was passing through Tiaga the Town Commandant informed him that four British officers had been captured at Tiaga and were living in the town, and S. went on to say that they were probably better off than we were. We were happy to hear this piece of news, and had a great celebration up at the house to express our joy. To-day has indeed been a red-letter day.

January 29th.—One day is the same as the rest. The air is so stuffed full of rumours that it is useless to record anything that is not supported by facts of sorts. It is said that the Czechs are driving the Reds back to Krasnoyask, also that the Japs refuse to leave Irkutsk, and that from Kansk (a station some 240 versts from here) to Vladivostock will be Social Revolutionary, supported by and guaranteed by Japan, and that west of Kansk to Central Russia will be under the Soviet Government.

If there is any kind of upheaval here, the situation will be very dangerous, as the retreating Reds will certainly take what they want, and without doubt a good many people will be done in by the rough element. We are told by our numerous friends who are prisoners that they will hide in the event of a "turn over" in Krasnoyask, and recommend that we should do the same thing. Where are we to hide? In any case there is no chance of any Czechs coming here unless they come as prisoners.

January 30th.—Nothing exciting to-day. We have considered the advisability of doing work unconnected in any way with the Soviet Government, and we have been offered jobs by private factories' managers. As all factories, and in fact every branch of industry, has been nationalised, whatever work we do will be helping the Reds, and as we have fully determined we will not in any way help the Reds, we will refuse to do work of any kind. Some of us have taken to giving English lessons to ladies. There is a perfect craze just now to learn English. None of the would-be pupils have much money, and 25 roubles per lesson is offered and accepted. This does not amount to anything, and is only pocket-money, as there are only half a dozen pupils offering. We could easily start a school, only no one has enough money to pay for lessons.

January 31st.—We are discussing the question of getting out of this house. Disease is raging in the town, and all kinds of

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filthy people are daily coming into the house, and it is suspected that there are cases of typhus in the rooms adjoining ours. If any of us get typhus it will spread through the whole party, as we are lying like sardines on two tiers, besides which it would then be impossible to get accommodation in any of the other houses, as people will refuse emphatically, and quite naturally, to allow any persons to go to any room, having come from a place where typhus has broken out. The hospitals, moreover, are filled to overflowing, and the sick are lying on the floors, and two or three in one bed. Medicines are extremely scarce, and the hospitals are hopelessly understaffed. If we can move into other rooms with clean families, one or two at a time, it will greatly diminish the chances of catching typhus, and if anyone of us does get it, he will be isolated from the rest. It will be too late to spread the party out after the disease has broken out, so it is deemed advisable to separate into other rooms whilst we are all healthy. Many people are living in clean houses, and are old residents of this town, and consequently have their own rooms, and are keen on Englishmen going to stay with them, as there is an order out stating that all rooms must be occupied, and Red soldiers are billeted on families. The families thus placed are in consequence very anxious to have some of us with them in order to fill up spare accommodation, and thus keep out Red soldiers who are anything but clean, and in other ways are undesirable guests in the houses of people who have strong anti-Bolshevik ideas.

February 1st.—The days all seem alike nowadays. Nothing new and a lot of rumours come pouring in. The dead horses are being collected on sleighs and dumped into yards. There they are skinned. Good meat is becoming scarce, and horse flesh is being sold, and the restaurants are turning out horse cutlets. People are shy of eating horse flesh after seeing sights in which dead horses figure largely. Two of our fellows moved out into other rooms, and we are trying to make arrangements for some more of us to get out.

February 2nd.—We all had lunch in a café to-day. We have had to sell some yen. We got 60 roubles to the yen. Also sold some American dollars at the rate of 100 to the dollar. In order to buy in provisions before the prices go up in leaps and bounds, we deemed it advisable to get hold of Soviet money. It was supposed that prices would be kept down, but things are getting dearer every day—I wonder whether we will be given money by the Reds. At the present time there is very little money in the town. The cancellation of Omsk money has not only hit the "bourgeoisie" hard, as was the

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object of the cancellation, but the workmen and peasants are also the sufferers. In order to keep the latter quiet they have been promised advances of money. Advances have been made to the workmen, but only 500 each, which does not go very far as they have to pay for wood and quarters which were free under the jurisdiction of the Whites.

February 3rd.—Some friends came to see us to-day, and, of course, brought all kinds of rumours with them. If I recorded all the rumours "all based on first-rate authority and straight from the horses' mouths," I would have to write rapidly all day. It is very difficult to know how to act when rumours come in, as, if rumours could be relied upon, undoubted action is necessary.

A lot of the Poles from the laager are now working in the station yard clearing up the filth. Ex-officers of the White Army have been forced to join the Red Army. They hold any kind of position from private to company commander. Care is taken to place late officers and soldiers of the White Army in amongst a high percentage of old and trusted men of the Red Army. When the regiments are up to strength they move on to the Eastern front. One of our old friends has got a job as Assistant to the Chief of Militia, and the Colonels of the Yagashi battery with whom we travelled from Bolotnoya to Tiaga on sledges, are both privates in the same section of a regiment of Reds. There are hundreds of such incidents. Two Italians came to see us to-day, an officer and his batman. They have come up from the East with some delegates and were passed through "No man's land." They are trying to get to Moscow, as the officer's wife is there, and he has not seen his wife for five years. We were forced to sell some more kit in the market to-day. Hundreds of people are doing the same thing. It is most interesting to go down to the market and see these well dressed people walking about hawking every conceivable kind of property in the bazaar. One has only to stand about with a garment or any other kind of article one wishes to sell, and gets an offer from someone for it at once. The Jews are the persons who are coining money hand over fist. A Commissar told us that the Jews are buying up Omsk money for Soviet money at the rate of 500 to 1,000 roubles Omsk, to one of Soviet, and then going East to the front and exchanging it again in recently captured towns for Soviet money, before people realise that Omsk roubles are valueless.

February 4th.—Nothing fresh happened this morning. We noticed fresh posters, showing the French President, President Wilson and John Bull sitting in easy chairs on a raised platform

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smoking large cigars, and evidently rolling in the lap of luxury, with a hungry surging mob around them, all clamouring for bread, and as a background are several gallows. There are many such posters, and the one cry is "Down with capitalists and the bourgeoisie." The posters are ridiculous, and are too crude to convey any intelligible meaning to the majority of illiterate people who stand round and gaze at them.

This evening the Italian officer came in and said that the Staff of the 5th Army wished to see us all to-morrow morning at 12 o'clock. We are all wondering what is in the wind now. Why could they not send one of their own people to tell us to go up to them? We cannot understand why we have been summoned to attend through the medium of a foreign officer. Anyway, we shall know all about it to-morrow.

February 5th.—We all went up to the Staff room this morning. The Commissar of the 5th Army Staff who was detailed off to tackle us, wanted particulars about us. He asked us whether we were willing to work and he was given a reply in the negative. He said that if we would do the same work for the Reds as we had done for the Whites we would be given nice quarters and be given food and money and would be well looked after. We replied that it was impossible for us to accept any work, and having worked for the Whites we could not and would not turn round and work for the Reds. The Commissar replied that up to now we had been treated as "guests" of the Reds, and not as prisoners of war, but that he could easily put us into the laager where other war prisoners were stuffed, and we could be forced to work. He reminded us that the laager was not a desirable place to be in. This we knew; the laager is perfectly awful, disease is rife there, and the death rate is terrible, amounting to 200 a day. He gave us five minutes to consider the question. I, as O.C. with full approval of all of us, told the Commissar through the medium of our Interpreter that he had already been given a reply to his question of our own free will, and that we would not work for the Reds, but as we were prisoners of war he had the right to put us in the laager, but that it was our final reply that we would not in any circumstances do any work.* The Commissar in reply said that the

* Extract of a report, made by a Danish gentleman returned from Siberia, who was present at this interview, to the British Foreign Office :

"Major Vining, R.E., as chief of the party was, shortly after their arrival at Krasnoyarsk, requested by the Bolsheviks to work and command his officers and soldiers to work for the Soviet Government, but the Major refused absolutely, unless, he said, the Soviet could show him a written command from the British Government and signed by the British War Officials, commanding him to work for the Soviet 'Govern-

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Americans had agreed to work and he could not see why we should object to do so, and went on to say that he understood that we had come out from England to help Russia, and in that case it should be immaterial to us what party happened to be in power, and that we should therefore work. We replied that we could not enter into politics with him, and that he had received our reply. He then told us that the four British officers captured at Tiaga had taken up the same obstinate attitude. He then took particulars about each of us, starting with myself.

When it came to the question as to whether we would do any work and if not, why not, I replied that I had received orders to do certain work in connection with the White Army and as I was no longer with the White Army my work automatically ceased on my being captured by the Red Army, and until I received further orders from competent authority I could not entertain any requests from the Soviet Government to continue any work. I was then asked whether I would work for the Red Army if I got instructions to do so from London. I replied that I would certainly carry out any orders given me by my Government. These questions and answers were recorded.

The next question was regarding money. How much money I had—answer : a hundred roubles. Do I want any ? Answer very much in the affirmative. That ended my paper, and I signed it.

The others were then similarly questioned in turn, the same questions being put to them on a stereotyped form. All replied that their answer to the questions was the same as mine. The Commissar looked at me—he evidently thinks I am to be thanked for all officers and men refusing to work. I wonder what is going to be the result of this interview ? The Commissar after finishing off our papers, bid us good morning, and left the room. His Secretary, we discovered, had been an interpreter with the American Mission, and we had a long chat with him. He was a very crafty Jew chap and tried to argue us into agreeing to do some work.

ment.' On receiving this answer the Kommisar asked the Major if he (the Major) knew that the Soviet could force the Britishers to work. The Major answered politely that he knew perfectly well that he and the other British subjects were entirely in the power of the Soviet ; they could shoot, hang, or put the whole party in the war prisoners' camp if they liked, but that they could not force British officers to do things against their will. After this answer the Kommisar left the room and never returned and the question about work has never been raised again."

PRISONERS OF WAR

He told us our four officers at Omsk were fit and well, but they also were doing nothing. We told the Secretary that the house we were living in was awful, and asked him whether it was not possible for us to get better accommodation.

He asked me to call to-morrow at his office and he would accompany me and inspect our lodgings.

Our lodgings are really the outside edge. A few days ago some filthy people came into the rooms next to us, and as we shrewdly expected, we are now afflicted with unwelcome visitors. We wash the place down and wash and scrub our clothes, and ourselves, but it is of no use. "Creepy crawleys" come through the wooden partitions from our neighbours, and as fast as we beat off an attack others fill the ranks of the slain in overwhelming numbers, and outflank us. It is awful! These animals are lice—real bad lice too, and we fear that the typhus louse will join their ranks, and if they do, we are indeed "for it." Goodness only knows what will happen if typhus breaks out. We are doing our very best to separate into parties of twos and threes, and get into clean rooms, but it is impossible to find accommodation. All the hospitals are crammed. I went into one hospital. Patients were lying on the floor, and the conditions of the hospital and the patients beggars description. The corridors have been used as lavatories. The stench was so overpowering that I could not go on, but had to make a dash outside. I was just in time to prevent my being sick. My companion was not so fortunate; he *was* sick. Imagine a sick man going into a place of this kind! And that was a hospital! No one would credit such statements, nor would I if I had not experienced these things myself. I wonder if any of the British Mission will ever forget this experience. One of our party was a prisoner in Germany for some considerable time. He cannot make a comparison between being a prisoner of war in Germany and here. The strain is never ending, and things are intolerable. We are lucky in many ways when compared with war prisoners in the laager, poor devils—a large percentage will never leave the laager alive.

February 6th.—I went to the office of the Secretary, and he accompanied me to our quarters. He agreed with us that the conditions under which we lived "left much to be desired," and he promised to see if he could do anything for us. I wrote out a telegram and a paper giving all our names, and gave it to the Secretary. Part of the 5th Army Staff are leaving for the Eastern Front to-morrow night. They will go about halfway by train, and the rest of the journey to Irkutsk will be made by sledges and by motor car. The Secretary has promised to

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send off our telegram on his arrival at Irkutsk, and says he will wire to us from Irkutsk in the event of the Staff being able to get in touch with the Allies, east of Irkutsk.

February 7th.—The 5th Army Staff moved East to-day, leaving some of their people behind to deal with local matters.

The French officer came in to-day and told us that all Americans, British, French, and Italians are going to be sent to Moscow. We at once went to the Staff Headquarters and saw the chief man. He informed us that it had been decided to send all foreign Missions to Moscow. He said that a special man would be sent with us to look after us and see that we got food on the journey, and he would be responsible for seeing that we arrived at Moscow fit and well. The chief also informed us that England and the American Government were coming to a working agreement with Soviet Russia, and that from Moscow we would be sent home. He also gave us an order to take to the Station Commandant for a fourth class car to accommodate us, and he instructed us to move into the car as soon as we possibly could.

CHAPTER VII

THE JOURNEY EASTWARDS

February 8th.—This morning two of our fellows went down to the station with their kit in order to occupy the wagon, with the object of preventing people sleeping in it overnight. Soldiers are continually wandering round the station yard looking for cars to spend the night in. As many of them are suffering from contagious diseases and our wagon has been cleaned and disinfected, we did not want to run the risk of anyone entering our carriage who was in any way suffering from contagious disease.

The car is a fourth class one with wooden bunks. There are three tiers which are divided off by small partitions into five parts. Each part will hold two people sleeping abreast, so that twenty people can get into the car. This is all very well when a short journey is to be made, but there are twenty-six of us, with all our baggage, wood for cooking and heating the car, and provisions for a long journey. In addition to this we have with us two French and two Italians, so the Lord only knows how we are all going to get into the car at all.

February 9th.—We all moved into the car this morning. By Jove, it is a hopeless crush. There is not sufficient space on the second shelf to sit up in bed, and the top shelf is almost as bad. We have to crawl into a bunk and arrange our baggage, and make our beds lying down. We fixed up a small cooking stove, and we are wondering how we are going to do the cooking on it for thirty people. We stuffed all the wood we could get into the car under the seats. The narrow corridor is blocked up with hanging coats. We have two wash basins only, which we brought down from the house with us. Washing in the morning, shaving, and dressing is going to be a sight for the gods. We have two married couples with us. Englishmen who have been in Russia for many years and married Russian girls. The ladies are very nice, but it is a distinct drawback having ladies with us with such accommodation at our disposal.

The husbands have rigged up blankets round their bunks in order to obtain a little privacy. Up at the house we lived in the same room as women were living in, and no one pays the slightest attention to the fact that these women are sleeping,

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eating, and dressing alongside one these days. It is impossible to observe all rules of etiquette, and we do our best to put up with it. The Russian has quite a different outlook from ours, and he doesn't appear to worry in the slightest about sexes being mixed up in one general living room.

February 10th.—We went up to the 5th Army Staff this morning. They asked us what food we had with us, and we told them we had very little, and also that we had not the wherewithal to buy any. The Staff told us that we and the Americans were being sent to Moscow, and from there would be sent home, and gave us to understand that friendly relations had been arrived at between England and Soviet Russia.

A Commandant has been specially deputed to travel with us, and it is his duty to look after us on the journey, and see that we arrive at Moscow fit and well. The Staff have promised to supply us with sufficient food to last us for one month. We expect to take a month to six weeks travelling to Moscow. It is going to be a very interesting, but, of course, a very risky journey.

All along we have had our hearts set on going East and *not* West. East, East, East, has been our cry. By going East we are getting quickly out of Russia and into civilisation ; by going West we feel that we are going into the heart of the turmoil, and we do not cotton to the idea of going to Moscow at all.

We hear that there are some British at Moscow who were captured on the Archangel Front, and also some from General Denekin's Army. We are told by people who have recently come from Moscow, that B.O.'s are serving as waiters in restaurants in order to get money to exist on. We do not believe this.

There is a terrible shortage of food in Moscow. The staff told us this, and starvation rations are served out to people. The prices of foodstuffs in Moscow, according to information given us by officers and soldiers who have come from there, are perfectly awful. I don't know what will happen to us when we get there, unless the Soviet Government give us food and money.

February 11th.—We are still here. The Commandant of the echelon on which we are travelling came to see us this morning. Our car has been shunted about all night. The Commandant is a very nice chap, and is arranging for our food to be sent down from the town to our carriage. He has given an order for wood to be supplied to us. He says that the cars of the Americans and ourselves will be attached to a passenger train, and at terminal stations our cars will be detached and attached

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to the first outgoing trains, so that we ought to make a quick journey.

There is an Englishman here, a Captain in the Canadians who was doing Red Cross work in Krasnoyarsk before the town was captured by the Reds. He caught scarlet fever last December, and was in bed on the American train. This train was captured by the Reds between here and Irkutsk, and brought back to Krasnoyarsk. As soon as we heard that the officer in question, Captain T., was back in Krasnoyarsk, we went to see him, and found he was in bed, convalescent but very weak. A week after this he contracted typhus, and was removed to a hospital in the town. I have been to see him several times. He is very slowly progressing. He is being well looked after by a Hungarian doctor who was a prisoner of war in the laager here. Captain T. says he owes his life to the Hungarian, who speaks English, and is very good indeed to T. We very much wish we could take T. with us, but he cannot be moved yet awhile, and he is in the best hospital in the town, and also in the hands of a man who will give him all the attention possible, and get him the necessary foodstuffs, etc. This doctor says that T. will be quite all right, and is getting on as well as can be expected. T. has had a normal temperature for the last ten days, and ought to pick up quickly.

February 12th.—Nothing new. Every day we expect to leave, but barring being shunted about the yard nothing else happens. Captain Horrocks is seedy to-day. He has got a temperature of 101 degs. He took some quinine, but was sick soon afterwards. All kinds of rumours flying about. It is said that the Czechs have sent a delegation to meet the Reds with a view to a cessation of hostilities, and that the situation in the East is clearing up. Different people tell us different things; some of the rumours are very interesting to us, and would affect our case considerably if true.

February 13th.—We are still here. The Commandant came to see us again, and said he was arranging our food stuff, and that it would be sent down to the car to-morrow. Many people have given us letters to take to their friends and relatives in Moscow, and quite a number of Russian officers have tried to get us to take them on our wagon as our provodnik and general factotum, but it is impossible to take anyone else for obvious reasons, besides which each one of us have papers which are examined by different officials from time to time.

Captain H. is worse to-day. He has been sick several times, and his temperature is 103. We got in the American doctor to see him. The doctor made a thorough examination of H., but

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says he cannot say for a day or two what is the matter with him. Jove, if it is typhus, it will be perfectly awful. It will probably spread, and crammed together as we are the typhus louse will soon get busy amongst us. We take it in turns to look after the stove at night in order to keep the car warm.

The Hungarian doctor is down with typhus. He sent for one of us and told us that Captain T. is well enough to be moved from hospital and is out of danger, and is not infectious. As there is no one now to look after T. and the hospital authorities cannot give the patients the necessary attention, we went up to the hospital and saw the head doctor. He confirmed what the Hungarian doctor had said, so we got a sleigh and brought T. down to our car and put him to bed. He is very glad indeed to get out of hospital and says he would never recover alone in the hospital.

A large number of men down with typhus die after they have passed the crisis due to the fact that they are not given nourishing food, but only get Russian black bread and thin soup. Their strength gives out and they go under, poor devils.

February 14th.—Our food stuff was brought down to the car this morning. Jove, the Reds are not going to let us starve. We have got 2½ carcasses of meat, heaps of flour, some rice, etc., and also, wonder of wonders, some tobacco and matches. We cannot understand this generosity on the part of the Reds. They have certainly treated us very well as regards our provisions for the journey. They gave us 15 lbs. of butter. Butter is very scarce and we are told by the Commandant that we will be given more butter when the train reaches places west of here, where butter is more plentiful.

We could not be given any sugar as there is none in the town. The doctor was in to see H. again to-day and says that to-morrow he will be able to say for certain what is wrong with him. The typhus rash makes its appearance as a rule on the chest and arms after five or six days from the time of the patient's falling ill, but as local medical opinions differ considerably on this point, we think that the American doctor is right. As it will be hopeless to have to put H. off the train at some small town *en route*, if he has got typhus, he cannot do better than remain in this town where we have got friends, and Captain Hayes, who is known amongst us as "Georgik" and has been with H. ever since coming to Siberia, will remain back to look after him. I took my turn of duty last night. H. needed constant attention and wanted water very frequently. I put an ice bag on his head. He was wandering a little and is very weak. He is extremely plucky and the whole time apologises for being a

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nuisance to us. He is the one man who has had all the hard work to do interviewing the authorities as he speaks Russian, and is as absolutely unselfish as a man could be. He is one in a thousand, and I hope old H. is not in for a tough time.*

February 15th.—H. has got typhus. We got a sleigh and after making arrangements with the hospital authorities we got H. up there into the same bed as T. had. This is the best hospital in the town, and is only a small one. H. was given clean hospital things, and put to bed. He was well wrapped up before being put on to the sleigh. He was too weak to walk, so P. and I carried him down from the car to the sleigh.

Poor old H. "Georgik" is remaining back, and he has got a room to himself in the town where he has made himself comfortable. We left provisions for them both and have given them all the money we could spare to carry on with until the Reds give us the money which they have promised.

We are leaving to-night for Moscow, and have received instructions to be on our car by eight o'clock to-night. It is a cursed nuisance having to leave two of the Mission fellows behind. Very bad luck considering everything we have gone through together safely, to have to leave two men behind at the eleventh hour just as we are leaving the town. We are filled with gloom.

February 16th.—We are still here. Old "Georgik" was delighted to see us. He said that he felt very lonely when he woke up this morning to think he was the only Englishman who would be walking the streets of Krasnoyarsk.

We made enquiries as to why we had not pushed off, and were told that a wire had been received from the *East* stopping us, as there was a delegation of the Allies at Cheeta in touch with Red delegates at Irkutsk, and the question of our being sent East was being discussed. If this news is true it is splendid.

* Extract from a report sent to the Secretary of State for War :—

"Captains Horrocks and Hayes :—

"Both these officers during the retreat were untiring in their efforts on behalf of the Mission and the refugees and civilians who were under our protection, in doing all in their power up to the date of our capture, 6th January, to obtain sleighs, food, accommodation, etc., and in helping the party along. Captain Horrocks contracted typhus while standing in queues for bread tickets on behalf of the Mission, and both he and Captain Hayes, before and after our capture were constantly exposed to unnecessary hardships, danger of disease, and exposure to the severe weather on behalf of the Mission.

"I strongly recommend that the services rendered by Captains Horrocks and Hayes be recognised by the award of the O.B.E. (Military)."

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We all want to go East and we are glad to remain here and see H. through the crisis which will take place in five or six days' time. The Americans appear to think that they will go East to-morrow. They never come to see us and we do not visit them. They are fighting amongst themselves, and each American we come across in the streets tells us what an awful lot the others are, and says that each man is working for his own ends. One told us that during a heated discussion, one of them remarked that it is a pity that they did not possess some of the consistency of the British who all pulled together in every matter and stuck to what they made up their minds to !

We have thoroughly washed down and disinfected the car, and the doctors tell us that they do not think there is any danger of infection being in the car. We are safer in the car than we would be up in the town, as typhus is raging like wild fire there. It's awful. Every day carts and hearses go through the streets. Heaps of our friends are down with typhus. It is a terrible disease. The patients get delirious.

H. was not able to recognise us when we went to see him. He is delirious, poor chap. His head has been shaved and he does look bad and thin already. The nurse said that he got out of bed and put his fist through a window. Captain T. did the same thing when he was in that hospital, and the nurse wanted to know whether Englishmen made it a practice of putting their fists through windows when delirious.

February 17th.—No news of our moving off yet. We are still sitting in the wagon. H. is still in a wandering state ; the crisis is expected in six days' time. He keeps trying to get out of bed and the orderlies have to watch him and hold him down. The nurses are very few and far between, and the orderlies ditto, and the patients cannot possibly get anything like the attention necessary for them. The 5th Army Staff tell us that they expect information as to what the Conference decides about us in a week's time. We are very glad that we will see H. through the crisis. He is drinking weak tea and milk. We buy the milk daily and arrange to get white bread for him. It is difficult getting milk and white bread.

I went up to see the Danes this morning. They are wondering what will be decided about them. They are waiting for Smarnoff, the Minister for Siberia, to return from Irkutsk, where he has been in conference with the Czechs and the Allied Representatives. They expect Smarnoff to fix up things for them.

February 18th.—Still no news of our moving off. H. is still the same. The crisis may be on the 22nd, as the period varies, but to-day the hospital people think it will be about the 22nd.

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Every day is the same. We are all sitting in the crowded wagon waiting for news. I go up to the Staff frequently and they still can tell us nothing. We have asked them for money and they said they have already wired to Moscow to get authority from the British Government to give us money. I hope that the Reds manage to get a wire through and that our Government will hurry up and arrange credit. We need "oof" badly.

February 19th.—Still nothing new. Every day the same. I take a long walk every day up to the town to make enquiries about H. I went into the hospital twice, but as it is so dangerous to the fellows in the wagon in case I carry away infection, have not been again, and "Georgik" gives me the daily news.

February 20th.—As before, nothing to record. H. is quieter ; his temperature is still high. He is given the milk which we buy and we have arranged to get him white bread and have also got him some honey to have when he gets over the crisis. By a great stroke of luck we have managed to get the necessary medicine prescribed. The chemist shops are very badly stocked and it is most difficult to get anything in the way of drugs in the town.

February 21st.—It is rumoured that a settlement has been arrived at between the Reds and the Czechs, but the rumours are so numerous and contradictory that they are not worth recording. H. very ill and delirious, and cannot, of course, recognise "Georgik," who goes to see him daily. The hospital is thick with the typhus louse and each time I went there, I saw patients sitting up in their beds de-lousing themselves. This typhus is a terrible disease. The victim invariably gets to a raving stage and is delirious for several days. It is a question of the heart standing the strain. A man with a sound heart has every chance of getting through, and a person with a weak one goes under. After a person is over the crisis, good and nourishing food is required. The patients in the hospital do not get anything but black bread and washy soup and coloured water called tea, and many die for want of proper nourishment ; in other words they succumb from weakness. It is very difficult writing on one's lap while sitting in a railway carriage with a good old racket going on the whole time.

February 22nd.—H.'s temperature is normal, and he passed the crisis last night. Cheers. We are all very relieved and joyful. No further news of our pushing off. The Staff still have no news for us and no reply to the wire to Moscow asking for money. On good authority the workmen are none too pleased with the present situation. They have to work harder than they had to before, and they are not getting their pay owing

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to the scarcity of money. They were led to expect by propaganda that they would get frequent holidays, and have very little work to do, and get enormous salaries. The peasants too are not at all satisfied. They bring their stuffs to the market and then a Commissar comes along and orders the stuff to be taken to some place occupied by the Bolsheviks, and offers a very low price for the peasant's wares. I saw a case in which a woman had brought a sleigh load of wood from a village into the market for sale. She sold the load to a customer for 450 roubles. After the sale had taken place, up rode a Commissar and ordered her to take the sleigh load to his house. The woman and customer both kicked up a fuss, but without getting any satisfaction. The Commissar paid the woman 150 roubles and the load was taken off to his house. Many such incidents occur daily. The peasants are telling the authorities that they will not bring farm produce to the market if they are going to be treated in this way, and the Authorities' reply is that men will be sent to the village to bring the stuff in, so that it comes to the same thing.

One of the N.C.O.'s not feeling well (Sergt. Illingworth) and has a temperature of 103 degs. As he has had a temperature before, some time ago, he thinks he has got malaria and as quinine put him right before he has taken nine grains.

I have had two or three goes of malaria, but dose myself with quinine. I did not have to lie up, though I felt very rotten one or two nights. Everyone hopes that Illingworth has not got "teiff," as typhus is called in Russian.

February 23rd.—H. is very much better to-day, and his temperature keeps normal. He does not wander now, his head being quite clear. I put on a garment over my frozen trench coat and went to see him. He was looking very bad. His eyes bloodshot and his eyelashes gummed up, lips cracked and sore, and teeth discoloured. Poor chap, he talked in a whisper and was very pleased to find we were all still in Krasnoyask, and that he had got past the crisis. Illingworth is the same, temperature has been as high as 104, but is down to 102. Cannot make it out. He says he feels thirsty the whole time and his bones ache. This sounds like malaria. Anyway, in another two days if it is "teiff" it will show itself. Red spots like a rash will show on his arms and chest. If it is "teiff" the Lord knows what will happen, we shall have to do something desperate. Every day we disinfect the whole car, and our clothes, and the car is scrubbed and washed down by women whom the authorities send twice a week.

If Illingworth has got "teiff" he has certainly not caught

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it in the car, because neither he or H. have been in the car long enough to have got it there, and Illingworth could not have caught it from H. as he was taken ill too soon after him. H. had the infection, which takes fourteen days to show itself, before he came into the car. The "teiff" louse does not live in wood but only in clothing and lays its eggs in the creases of the clothing of persons. No description of wild animals has been discovered in the car, thank goodness.

February 24th.—Still no news of our moving on. H. is getting better at a splendid rate. He has got an enormous appetite and is always hungry. He is on slops still, but shortly will be allowed to eat anything he likes. I. is not better, and looks and feels the same. He is off his food, of course, but drinks the milk we get for him. To-morrow we shall have the doctor's verdict. The American doctor will examine him and tell us what is the matter. Jove, this is a rotten time for us all. The moment one man is through the wood another unfortunate gets sick. One or two of us have had goes of fever and, of course, everyone thinks to himself "teiff," but the indisposition passes and everyone gives a sigh of relief. All of us get plenty of fresh air, and take long walks. The food now is much better and lots of it, and in consequence everyone is looking fitter.

February 25th.—Our worst fears are realised. Illingworth has got "teiff." After a lot of trouble we managed to get him into the same hospital as H. and in a bed next to him. He was not very weak and he insisted on walking down to the sleigh which drove him up to the hospital—stout fellow! It is a great business disinfecting all the clothes. I.'s bedding and stuff were put on to the roof of our car where they were soon frozen stiff. This will kill any insect and destroy any eggs which might exist in the kit.

The togs he went up to hospital in were served in the same way. H. is getting on famously, and has not rambled in his mind since the crisis. He has horrible nightmares which rather upset him, and he is very inclined to worry on our account. He thinks he is using up our funds unnecessarily—he was told not to talk such rot and was satisfied when I told him we all were having milk and saccharine in our tea.

H. is a most unselfish person and a "top notch."

No news of our going away and the Staff are still awaiting news from Irkutsk.

February 26th.—H. very much better and Illingworth is about the same. I went again to the Staff and I pointed out to them that we were disgracefully overcrowded.

When first we were allotted this wagon I pointed out to the

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Staff that the accommodation was insufficient, and in reply they said they quite realised how very overcrowded we were, but owing to the fact that our car was being attached to a special train for Moscow it was impossible to attach an additional car.

I now pointed out that they could not make the same excuse for not giving us more accommodation, and also told them that two of our party were down with "teiff."

The President of the 5th Army Staff replied that "he could not guarantee that Englishmen would not get 'teiff,' which, as we knew, was raging throughout Russia, and in this town alone there are 30,000 (thirty thousand) cases." I replied that that was all right, but he was able to provide us with more accommodation, and could take steps to minimise our chances of getting the disease. He agreed to give us another wagon similar to our own, and said that we were much safer living in our car down at the station, where we were isolated, than up in the town where nearly every house had a case of "teiff" in it.

He gave us an order to the Station Commandant to hand over a fourth class car to us.

February 27th.—No news from Irkutsk. H. gets better and looks fitter each day. I. is about the same, but is not delirious. I hope to goodness that no one else gets this "teiff." We have taken every precaution possible to prevent the disease from spreading, and bug powder is sprinkled everywhere and on everything.

February 28th.—Nothing new. Went up to the Staff this morning, but no reply received from Moscow regarding money, and also no news as to when we are leaving. H. is much better and I. is the same. I. is not delirious at all, nor is he violent, but remains quietly in bed.

February 29th.—As above, nothing new. H. is improving steadily, and I. is exactly the same as he was yesterday. The weather is getting a little warmer, but still there is a sharp frost on, which is felt when there is a wind blowing. Captain T. is almost well. He gets up and shaves and partly dresses. He can look after himself now and there is no need to wash him, etc., ourselves.

March 1st.—All kinds of rumours come in ; none affect our position very much. The only rumour which would interest us is "when are we going?" and another is, "will we be given any money?" H. will be allowed to leave hospital soon. We have arranged for a bright sunny room to take him to when he gets out, and we will keep him there till we are ready to move off, and will then bring him down to the car. There is a

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strong rumour that we are going East. We all sincerely hope so ; we think the East savours of civilisation, and West only further into the boiling mess of Revolution. However, the foundation for the rumour is not strong enough to excite us.

March 2nd.—One day seems the same as another. This evening I walked along the ice on the Yenesei River. All along the sleigh track over the ice there were numerous carcasses of horses lying in all kinds of attitudes, some with their heads in the air, some lying on their backs with all four feet out straight in the air, and some in a position as if they are just about to get up after lying down. All were, of course, frozen stiff, and scarcely a carcass was intact, the numerous dogs having well feasted themselves on them.

H. is getting on like a house on fire, and I. is the same. We cannot understand why he is not delirious, as invariably " Teiff " patients have become delirious before they arrive at the crisis.

March 3rd.—I went up to the Staff to-day about money and news of our going, with disappointing results. I tendered a telegram to Colonel Johnson at Omsk, but the Chief of Staff was unable to accept it. The rumours of our going East are stronger this morning. The sentry deputed to look after our wagon has had his papers changed and on his papers now there is an order for him to accompany the Mission as far as Irkutsk. It certainly looks as if we are for the East, and the Americans state that they certainly think they are going East. H. is better and will be allowed to leave hospital the day after to-morrow. I. is the same as he was yesterday. The hospital authorities seem to think that he is in for only a fairly mild go of " teiff."

March 4th.—The Americans state they have orders to go East. I went up to the Staff and there I was informed that the Americans were being sent East, but that we should be sent to Moscow. No reasons were given us at all except that this had been ordered, but by whom, we were not told. We cannot make it out at all. Evidently satisfactory settlements have been arrived at regarding Americans, but not as regards us. We were told some time ago that we were only being sent to Moscow to be exchanged with Russian prisoners of war and that from Moscow we shall be sent straight home to England—but we wonder ! H. is walking about the hospital and is very anxious to get out of the place. There is no change in I.'s condition. He remains sensible and is not at all inclined to wander.

We bought some provisions from the Americans in the way of porridge and butter. This is indeed a God-send ! We

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have not tasted such things as porridge for ages. The Americans took a document for the value of the stuff we purchased and they can realise the money when they reach Harbin. They were very elated at the thought of going East, and consoled with us on account of our being sent West.

We are not at all downhearted, and thoroughly enjoyed the condolences and still more the prospects of having porridge for breakfast to-morrow morning. We also bought some dried apples from the Yanks, so we consider that for the present we are in clover, as regards the food question. What lucky dogs we are, *n'est ce pas?*

March 5th.—H. was taken from the hospital to his room. He is very bucked indeed, and is very anxious to see all the members of the party. He took a stroll round the room for ten minutes, and then sat in a chair. He has a ravenous appetite and is allowed to eat anything he likes. We got him some eggs, white bread, milk and honey, which he goes for in good style.

I. is past the crisis, thank goodness, and his temperature is normal. This is a great relief to us all. We can get no news of our going. If we hold on for another week we shall in all probability be able to take I. with us. Jove, it will be splendid to go off with our party complete. When we thought we were going East with the Americans, we prepared to bring H. down to the car, and "Georgik" was to go with the party, and I arranged to stay back and look after I. and, when fit to travel, follow on.

March 6th.—I. is still normal and H. looking fitter each day. Captain T. has been a very difficult and obstreperous patient. He damns every doctor that comes to see him, and wandered the whole time for about ten days and was a most unreasonable person. The American doctor stated he never met such a patient. Even now when he is up and about he is very difficult to deal with, and I personally have to assert my authority as his senior officer before I can get him to do anything. The other officers and men who, in my absence attend to him, are either ignored or get a very thin time of it. However, he was a hopeless wreck when we brought him down to the car, and had it not been for our insistence, that he should be made to sit up in bed, etc., on the advice of doctors and nurses, he would have been bedridden for the rest of his life—he is now very thankful that we made him do things. He now shaves and washes himself daily, but still insists on diving into bed the moment our backs are turned, though he admits that each day he feels the better for having got out of bed and sat up for an hour or two.

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March 7th.—H. is quite convalescent and takes a lot of exercise in walking about the room. He has an excellent appetite and is very anxious to take a stroll out of doors, but the weather has turned colder and it is therefore better for him to wait a day or two until the weather changes again.

I. is getting on all right, but has no appetite yet. He should get ravenously hungry in a few days time. He says the conditions in the hospital are perfectly awful. There are only two nurses and three orderlies to look after 125 patients, many of whom have to be kept by force in bed as they get out in their delirious state and wander about the room and interfere with other patients. The sanitary arrangements are foul and the atmosphere ditto, as I can testify, but what else can be expected when the hospital is so hopelessly understaffed.

I went up to the Staff regarding a further supply of food, and they promised to give us what was necessary including tobacco. The Reds are certainly treating us very well, and, considering everything, we have no fault to find with them. It's a curse having to wait, for three or four hours sometimes, to see the members of the different Committees, but this is mainly due to office boys and petty secretaries who are suffering with swollen heads, and take a delight in keeping us and other people waiting in order to show what "big bugs" they really are. These lads stroll about the rooms with cigarettes in their mouths and wear extraordinary uniforms, with heaps of red material very much in evidence.

I saw a woman Commissar in one of the rooms I had occasion to visit. She had her hair cut short like a boy's, wore a skirt which hung like a sack round her, and a cigarette was thrust in a corner of her mouth. Fastened to her belt was a small revolver. She was about as ugly as they make 'em, and she really looked a dreadful, awe-inspiring sight.

March 8th.—The Minister for Siberia arrived in Krasnoyarsk from Irkutsk last night. I tried to get an interview with him concerning our position, etc., etc., but was unable, owing to the numerous people who were on the list ahead of me all with the same object in view. I was, however, told that if I go to the Staff to-morrow morning, I would get an interview with Tavarish G. who was dealing with our case. We are all very anxious to know when and how and where we are going, and different other things, and we hope we shall be able to get some news to-morrow. The Danes are all anxious to get an interview with the same man regarding the exchange of war prisoners, as they were told that all British war prisoners in Russia and civilians would be sent home in exchange for Russian prisoners

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in England. This is cheering news and we all hope that it is true.

March 9th.—We went to the Staff this morning, and after waiting two and a half hours at the pleasure of an office boy, I wrote a note and addressed it to the man I wanted to see, complaining about appointments with him not being kept owing to his secretaries not informing him that we wished to see him, and also telling us untruths regarding time fixed for interviews. I gave the note to a lady clerk and she took it in, with the result that we were admitted into the presence of the great being without delay. I hope the secretary "gets it in the neck." Jove, I would give a lot to get some of those office boys and secretaries alone!

The great man told us at the interview that no money had been arranged for us, but that we should be leaving for Moscow either to-day or at the latest to-morrow. He went on to say that two month's provisions would be put on board and that a Commandant and five soldiers would escort us. The Commandant would supply us with money on the journey.

I told him that one of our N.C.O.'s was ill in hospital and that I required papers as I intended to remain behind with him. The great man said that this would be arranged and also permission would be given for Mr. and Mrs. Y. to stay behind, as Mr. Y. was shortly expecting to become a proud father, and this interesting event could not possibly take place in a crowded carriage full of men, with no doctors and nurses present to cope with such circumstances. The G.M. also told us that we were being sent to Moscow *en route* for England, and that we should not be detained in Moscow at all.

We immediately left and informed H. and Y. of what the G.M. told us, and arrangements were at once made to get H. and "Georgik" to our car, together with their kit. Two of us went to see the doctor and nurse who are looking after I.. They both said that I. is absolutely fit to travel, so that we can take him with us. This is excellent, as it saves a vast amount of trouble in finding a room for me to live in in the town, that I can take Illingworth to when he is fit to leave hospital—an extremely difficult matter; and also making arrangements for food, as there are no cafés now in the town, and everyone is short of food, and the money question is a very acute one. Besides all these there would be endless trouble getting a convalescent man through such a long and difficult journey. As I am in charge of the party, I am again glad to see the whole lot of us together and to travel with them.

To-morrow we will go up to the hospital and fetch I. down to

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the car. We bought a mattress for H. and will buy another one for I. to-morrow. One has to be very careful in taking a patient out of a "teiff" hospital, as the lice are very numerous and all the clothing has to be left behind, and the patient must walk into a clean outfit again after being thoroughly disinfected with powder, etc. H. is very glad to be in the car, and is very cheerful and fit. The Y.'s have left the car and have occupied a room near the hospital. The Staff promised to arrange for Mr. and Mrs. Y. to be sent on after us as soon as they are ready to travel. As Mr. Y. speaks Russian fluently, having lived in Russia many years, and his wife is a Russian lady, they will not experience much difficulty in fixing up their departure, and as regards food they have many friends in the town, one family of their acquaintance having arranged to feed them. We are also leaving a store of provisions behind for the Y.'s; so they think they will be all right. We only met the Y.'s in Krasnoyarsk and they have been a great help to us, and I am very sorry indeed that circumstances compel them to remain behind.

March 10th.—Went up to the Hospital this morning and took I. some milk and white bread. He was very pleased indeed to hear that he would be taken out of hospital later on in the day. At 3.30 two of us went up and Illingworth walked unaided from his bed to the passage where his clean clothes were, and we then got him down to a waiting droski and arrived at our car none the worse for the journey. A thaw has set in, and the sledges have had wheels put on to them, and many have disappeared and wheeled traffic has taken their place. The thaw will not last at this time of the year. A thaw sets in for a few days and then it freezes hard again and snowstorms are also very frequently met with in February.

H. is doing splendidly, and went for a short stroll outside the car this morning. He is feeling very fit now.

A Commandant and five soldiers came down to our car. They are accompanying us to-morrow and are being accommodated three in each car. We wonder whether they are sent as a guard over us or merely to prevent persons entering our car at each station we stop at.

March 11th.—We are still here, and expect to leave to-night. Our Commandant has gone to the Staff to get the papers. He has got a document authorising him to obtain provisions for us at stations *en route* along our journey.

He has not yet returned and it is now 10 p.m., so it looks as if we will be here another day. We have sat in this wagon now for over a month! Think of it, waiting to go, and the days

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roll on, but we are at a standstill ! Will we ever get out of this blessed country ? We were informed by the Minister to Siberia that we are prisoners of war, and he went on to inform us that he could stuff us into "jug" if he wished to, and the same treatment should be meted out to us as is given to Russian prisoners in England.

We wonder what the deuce is wrong with him. We had a sing-song on the strength of the cheering information, but wonder what a Moscow prison is like in these days. It has a fearful reputation. However, we have quite enough to worry about for the present, without contemplating doubtful joys of the future.

We are told by pals of ours that many ex-officers of the White Army who were arrested and put into the prison—not laager, where most of them were—have disappeared. They say that executions by shooting are taking place in spite of assurances from the Reds to the effect that the death penalty has been done away with. Ten days ago a midnight house-to-house search took place and over 4,000 ex-White Army officers were arrested. Many were put into the laager and the more important ones into the prison. Many of our friends are now in the prison.

March 12th.—We are still here. Last night a telegram was received by the 5th Army Staff from the British Mission at Harbin asking if the English were at Krasnoyarsk. A reply was sent that we were here. I went to the Staff this morning and they told me that they were waiting to hear from Harbin further. All our train papers were ready and we were on the eve of departure when the telegram arrived, and the Staff told me that it was no use starting us off West to Moscow in case our people at Harbin asked for us to be sent East, as we should only get 200 versts West and then have to be brought back in the event of its being decided to send us home via Harbin and the East.

We are all anxiously waiting to hear what will be decided. We are absolutely sick of sitting in this wagon waiting to move. We have now been in the wagon five weeks. We had made up our minds that we should be sent to Moscow. It will be a very interesting trip through the Ural Mountains and many ancient towns, and Moscow itself will be well worth seeing even under the present conditions when food is so scarce and things upside down. We are informed that we shall not be kept at Moscow, but will be sent straight home, but by what route we don't know, as many alternative routes have been suggested to us by the Authorities, and we have come to the

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conclusion that they do not know themselves how we shall get on from Moscow.

If we are given any option in the matter, we are one and all for the East every time. Our two "Chinks" have decided not to accompany us to-morrow, so we have got permission to take with us two prisoners of war, an Austrian and a Hungarian, to do our cooking, etc. It is rather unique that we, being prisoners of war, should have other prisoners of war to do work for us.

The invalids are getting on famously. H. went for quite a long walk to-day and felt very much better for it, and so did Captain T.

I. is getting on fine and can walk about and has a great appetite. The Staff told me to go up and see them again to-morrow as a reply from Harbin is expected to-night. We all hope that we go East. A thaw has set in and the streets are ankle-deep in liquid mud, though there is hard compressed snow beneath the surface. Horrible sights are met with in the street. Coming home I saw two carts with semi-naked corpses on them. By the look of the unfortunate beings it looked as if they had been shot. No attempt whatsoever had been made to cover up their faces or bodies, and the wounds in the chest and other horrible details were exposed to the full view of the public in the crowded streets.

The carts were coming from the direction of the gaol where it is rumoured executions take place daily by shooting. As a decree has been issued that no more executions will take place, I am unable to understand where persons who were put in prison are disappearing to. Friends who visit the gaol to see their comrades are told that they have died.

Owing to persons eating horse flesh, a disease called "sap," which is equivalent to the foot and mouth disease which cattle get, has broken out. The Authorities say that there is no cure for "sap" and any person getting "sap" is shot straight away. When a person in the gaol disappears, it is therefore an easy matter to tell enquirers that their friend unfortunately contracted "sap" and had to be shot. And so things go on.

March 13th.—We heard this morning that a telegram had been received from the East and that the Mission would be sent East and not to Moscow. We are all, of course, very excited at the thought of going East, and I am going up to the Staff to-morrow to have this information verified. The invalids are getting on fine; the only man who is not out of the wood is I., but he is getting stronger each day, and has a splendid appetite.

We are going to be supplied with a week's provisions, so our

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Commandant informs us. This will carry us to Irkutsk and it looks as if we are really going East. The thaw still continues, and the roads and streets are ankle deep in liquid mud. In the summer they are equally deep in dust ; worse than any Eastern town I have ever struck.

March 14th.—A week's provisions were sent down to the car, and the Staff sent a letter requesting me to go to the Military Transport Office, and I and my interpreter went up there, and were informed that the Mission would be sent to Irkutsk, and that a Commissar would travel with us to see that we got along the way all right. We were informed that we should be handed over to the Revolutionary Committee at Irkutsk, and they would take charge of us from thence onwards. Hooray ! We are all very glad that at last we have received some definite information as to where we will be sent. Undoubtedly we have been systematically lied to. On returning to the car we found that the Commissar deputed to look after us had arrived. He is an excellent fellow and very well disposed towards us. His papers are all in order, but he is unable to say whether we shall leave to-morrow or the day after. The weather has turned frosty again, which is a good thing. We are delighted to think that we shall soon be out of Krasnoyarsk. The place was getting very smelly, and it is feared that cholera and smallpox will break out.

March 15th.—We expected to leave to-night, but our Commissar has not turned up, and the Station Commandant has not received any information about our leaving. The Italian officer and his batman have left our car as they do not wish to go East, and have received permission to remain in Krasnoyarsk for the present, and go to Moscow when it can be arranged for them to do so.

The French officer is sick and has also received permission to remain behind, so we shall simply be a British party going East. The invalids are O.K. H. goes for long walks daily now, and so does Captain T. I. is daily getting better.

In the case of "teiff" patients, once they are over the crisis, it only requires good nourishment and nursing to put them on their feet again, and the only thing to be feared is "vesvrotni teiff," which is contracted from a bug bite. As "sifnoi teiff" and "vesvrotni tieff" patients are mixed up together in the same wards, there is always a chance, and in fact the percentage is high, of "sifnoi teiff" patients catching "vesvrotni teiff." Captain T. and H. are past "sifnoi" danger stage, and I. will be another week before he can "cock a snooker" at "sifnoi teiff" also.

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March 16th.—We expected to leave to-day certain, but our friend the Commissar has not turned up yet. I think I shall go up to the Staff and the Transport Office to-morrow and find out who and what are holding us up, as our week's provisions are being consumed, and we shall run short on the journey. I. had a temperature this evening. His insides have not been behaving themselves as they should and he gave us false information about this. He has now told us the truth and the necessary laxative implement has been applied with some success. Silly donkey, he has been very silly on previous occasion when in hospital about giving the medical authorities the required information about his insides, as he is scared of the laxative, and has the most extraordinary ideas and notions as to what his insides consists of. He was warned not to tell us lies, but until he got a temperature he did not tell us the truth.

March 17th.—I went with an interpreter to the Staff and they informed me that the Mission would be leaving to-night. A telegram was also read out to the effect that British representatives were leaving Cheeta for Evrediudinsk where we shall be handed over to them. Also a wire was received by us from two of our fellows from Cheeta telling us that they were taking steps on our behalf. Clothes and money will be awaiting us at Evrediudinsk and we all hope that clothes include other things in the way of food, drinks and smokes. Oh, what joy it will be to taste a drink and a decent cigarette or cigar again, or tobacco for our pipes! We are smoking "mahoka," which is made from the bark of trees. We have not tasted a cigarette worthy of the name for a long time. Even at Omsk and Novo Nik we only had "T and B" cigarettes, which catch the throat in due course; so our kingdom for good tobacco and other such luxuries which one ate as a matter of course, and things we looked upon as a right to have, will in future be regarded in a totally different light, and after the deprivation we have had to put up with such articles as eggs, jam, confectionery of any kind and fruit will be treated as a God-send! I. still has a temperature and is off his food. Our car has been shunted about for two hours, and is now attached to a train. Our Commissar is aboard and we are actually to leave to-night. We are wild with excitement and I was compelled to inflate the "goose" and play the "Cock-o'-the-North" on the bagpipes while numerous budding drummers on improvised drums kept time. Our Commandant and his soldiery and the Commissar were delighted with the performance and could not make out what produced the squealing and squawking of the pipes.

Our guards very much appreciate the orchestra (banjo and

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guitar) which strikes up at night, and our choruses, and they encore certain tunes which appeal to them.

March 18th.—We left Krasnoyask at eight o'clock this morning ! Cheers ! We made a very good run up to three o'clock, when we arrived at Klokniavaya. I.'s temperature still remaining high and on arrival at Klokniavaya we sent for a doctor. Two doctors came along and decided that I. had probably got ves-vrotni or recurring "teiff," and as he would probably require injections, he could not go on with us, but had to go into hospital.

By a great stroke of luck there is a doctor at Klokniavaya who has been in America for several years and both his wife and he speak good English. They were very glad to see English men and to speak English with us. This station is only a village with a few houses, but the hospital is much the best I have seen under Russian control. Illingworth was given a nice bright room to himself, and he had the luxury of having an English bath and was put to bed. He felt very cheerful and is in good hands with a special nurse to look after him. One of the officers, Lieut. Stephens, remained with Illingworth and he has been accommodated with the doctor and his wife.

We left S. with money and stores sufficient to get all they both require, and on arrival at Irkutsk steps will be taken on their behalf, and I also have sent a letter back to Krasnoyask informing the 5th Army Staff about these two staying back, and requesting that when I. is fit to travel, arrangements should be made to send them on. Klokniavaya is 225 versts from Krasnoyask. We averaged about 31 versts per hour which is a different rate from 21 versts per day, which we averaged coming from Novo Nik.

On returning from the hospital having seen I. comfortably installed, we met P. who was running from the station to the hospital to tell us that the train was leaving. We were just too late, and the train left without us. All S.'s baggage was chucked out on the line, which we gathered up and took to the room set aside for S. at the doctor's house.

We then returned to the station, and the station master told us that he was very sorry that he had misinformed us as to the time of departure of our train, and that it had left sooner than he had expected.

We were all very angry, and our position was not very enviable. We were without papers, money, or anything to eat. The S.M. informed us that another train by a stroke of luck would be leaving in about an hour and a half, and that he would get us accommodation on that train. We ran a con-

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siderable risk of getting into trouble should any Red official come along, and ask us who we were. The only papers we happened to have with us were documents from the Town Commandant at Krasnoyarsk giving us permission to walk about that town, but not allowing us to leave it, and the only authority for us to leave Krasnoyarsk for Irkutsk was in the possession of our Commandant. The night before we left Krasnoyarsk two members of the dreaded Chervisverchika Committee came into our car and questioned us closely. I happened to be having a bath in a big canvas camp bath, and he and the Commandant and soldiers discovering me in the bath were so interested and taken up with the novelty of the bath, that they crowded round to examine it, and forgot the business which brought them into the car. I took no notice of them and continued with my ablutions, amid shrieks of delight from the rest of our fellows, and the Chief of the Secret Service men said that they would not go through our baggage if we told them that we had no arms concealed. He went on to say that he would unquestionably accept the word of any Englishman, but had we been Russians he would have searched all our baggage thoroughly, even had we sworn on our honour that there were no arms concealed.

We said we had no arms, but that he could search or do anything he liked in the way of a search. He seemed to rejoice in repeating what he had said.

We marvelled at the man making such a statement in front of his own countrymen, but they did not take any exception to it at all. The Chief then went to our other car and made the same statement there. On passing out, he said "Good-bye, my good English comrades," and we said "ta-ta."

This Secret Service is dreaded by all the Russians, as they have the power to arrest and search any person they wish to, and owing to their good offices (?) many hundreds of persons have found themselves in the prison and have disappeared altogether. There is no appeal at all against the actions of the Chervisverchika.

We were therefore particularly anxious to avoid being seen by any of these Secret Service men, as it was on the cards that they would entrain us back to Krasnoyarsk. The Station Commandant said he would get us accommodation on the train when it arrived, which he did. All four of us got into a wagon in the rear of the train where the train conductors and firemen were travelling spare. An hour after the arrival of the train, it left. The night was bitterly cold and there was no room to lie down, so we sat up from 8.30 to 1 p.m. When

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we arrived at Boshahkovo where the majority of our train companions got out, we were able to lie down on some narrow planks. We could not lie down for more than half an hour at a time as we got too cold, and had to get up and sit near a stove which was alight in the middle of the wagon. I had no overcoat on, so I sat near the stove and kept putting pieces of wood on it throughout the night. At 3 a.m. one of our Russian friends put on a kettle of water and we had a drink of hot water all round. We were very hungry, as we had missed our dinner and only had a bite of dry rings of bread with some coarse meat sausage which we purchased at Klokniavaya.

We travelled like this till next day when at eight o'clock we arrived at Elanskaya where to our joy we found our train waiting.

March 19th.—Our train is still here, and we are all wondering when we are going to move on. It was like getting back to civilisation to get back to our carriage again. Everything seemed A.I. after our "tiploska" nightride, and my blankets on wooden planks felt like a feather bed after the bare planks in the wagon. The weather is perfect, warm sunshine and keen air, and clean underfoot, as the snow is crisp and dry. There is quite a sharp frost on these days, and it is cold at nights without a fire, so the "orderly for the day" has to sit up all night and keep the fire going. We all take it in turns to do this, and during the night make tea and toast and read, and so the time passes fairly quickly.

March 20th.—We left Elanskaya at 11 a.m. and arrived at Kloochee, some 114 versts away at 7 p.m., and after a short halt ran on to Vengeka, where we are now, 10 p.m.

The scenery was lovely, fir forests and hills standing out clearly amidst white snow, and at stations where the train stopped we got out and stretched our legs.

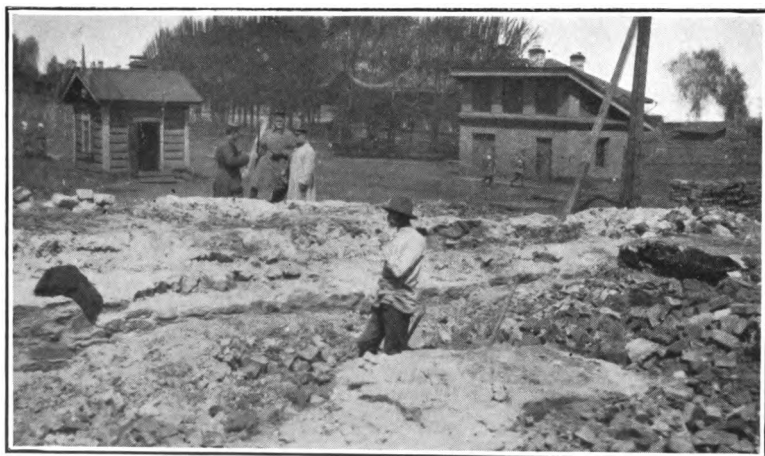
March 21st.—We arrived at Taishet at 3 a.m. and left at 3 p.m. This station had been burnt to the ground last winter by the Bolsheviks, when they were bombed out of the station by the advancing Czechs. Two of the officers who are with us now had been present at Taishet when the fight occurred, and one had a good photograph of the burning station. I took two snapshots of the whole of our party and our guard. After losing my camera while trekking on sleighs with the Yagashi Battery it was brought to me by one of the Yagashi gunners at Krasnoyask. He found it in a sack on a sleigh belonging to the Machine Gun Section of the Yagashi Battery.

March 22nd.—We left Taishet at 3 p.m. yesterday, and arrived at Alyamal at 7 p.m., and after a halt of two hours ran to Nejneoodensk, where we arrived at 3 a.m. this morning.

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THE RETREATING CZECHO-SLOVAKS BLEW UP ALL BRIDGES, THUS PREVENTING THE RED ARMY FROM BRINGING UP ROLLING STOCK TO THE FRONT.



TYPICAL RUIN OF A RAILWAY STATION DEMOLISHED BY THE RETREATING BOLSHIEVKS. RUSSIAN, BRITISH AND FRENCH OFFICERS IN FOREGROUND. SIBERIA, 1919.

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We are now only 468 versts from Irkutsk. At about one o'clock we left this station and went seven versts down the line, when we came to a large bridge. The middle span of this bridge had been blown up by the retreating Czechs who had fought a rear-guard action with the advancing 5th Army, the Army which had captured us.

The railway was laid over the ice ; large logs had been placed in position, and cross logs lashed with iron bars to these, and then sleepers fastened down.

This was a clever piece of engineering, but it was considered inadvisable to risk the weight of a locomotive over the ice, so our engine which had pushed our train out from Nejneoodensk, slowly pushed the wagons down the slope over the ice, and another engine came from the opposite side and waited until the train had bridged the river, when she backed on to our wagon which was leading and pulled the train across the ice up the opposite bank. Thus all the wagons of the train were got across the ice without either engine going on to it.

I took two photographs of the broken bridge and also photographs of the block-house and barbed wire entanglements. All the bridges we passed had block-houses and wire entanglements at both ends of the bridge, and the forest on each side of the line had been cleared by the Czechs in order to put up a good rear-guard action. We passed graves of the soldiers who fell during the recent fighting at these spots.

The Czechs were some 20,000 strong and they had it all their own way ; so much so, that there was no chance of their being scuppered by the Bolsheviks, who finally came to terms with them, and the Czechs are now being allowed to withdraw quietly to Vladivostock without further fighting, and they in their turn have stopped blowing up bridges and otherwise destroying the railway as they withdraw.

After getting over the ice, the sentry who was in the first instance to have accompanied us East to Irkutsk, but finally went with the Americans, came into our car. He was very pleased indeed to see us, and said that the Americans after remaining in Irkutsk four or five days went on Eastwards, and we hope the same will happen to us. After a short stoppage our train went on, and we are making good time at present, and hope to get to Tooloon to-morrow morning, where we will have to leave our cars and go by sledges over the ice to other cars, as the large bridge ahead is also broken, and the river is too wide to bridge in the way the last one was, so we are wondering how we shall get on as regards the transshipping.

March 23rd.—We arrived at Ootae raziast at 3 a.m. this

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morning, and have been here the whole day, as our engine left us for some reason or other and forgot to return. Drat the old bus, why cannot it come back? Near the line is a pond and we spent quite a time sliding on the ice. We have one pair of skates, so three of us took it in turns to have a dart on them. I sat down with painful frequency while endeavouring to do a smart bit of turning. My crashes were appreciated by a mixed audience of British, Russians and one Chink, all of whom showed their appreciation in the usual manner. Skates fixed on to Canadian shoe packs, which protrude four inches beyond the toes, and have no edge are difficult to skate with over rough ice, but then a bad workman blames his tools and all three of us did this. A snowballing match took place between two of our party and the Russians thoroughly applauded a good shot to the ear on the part of either combatant. Having finished snowballing each other at close quarters, they next seized snow shovels and literally flung shovelfuls of snow into each other's faces until one could not distinguish "t'other from which," amidst whirling shovels and flying snow. I think they both won, and the contest was considered a draw.

We tried to buy some eggs, but "nothing doing," so we took a reel of cotton to a farmhouse. The good housewife snapped at the bait at once, and we swopped ten eggs for one reel of cotton which was good going, as eggs cost 10 roubles each, when you can buy them. We went back to the car and got more reels of cotton, and soon had quite a collection of eggs, the women soon scented the cotton, and we had quite a number round our car all clamouring for cotton in exchange for eggs. My word! the eggs were top-hole. We each had two for tea. It is ages since we tasted an egg and all the eggs were absolutely new laid. Eleven p.m. and we are still here. It's rotten being held up like this, as we have been doing a fairly good journey up to now. I wonder how I. is? We sent a letter back to S. by our one-time sentry who was returning to Krasnoyarsk from Irkutsk. The other two invalids are invalids no longer. Jove, the weather is perfectly lovely! Warm sunshine, and keen fresh air with crisp snow underfoot; surrounded by lovely forests and hills. In different circumstances one would be more inclined to feel that it is good to be alive.

March 24th.—We arrived at Tyloon this morning. We have to leave our cars here and tranship all our baggage across a frozen river halfway between this place and the next raziaist, a distance of nine versts. Our Commandant went off to see whether there were any wagons waiting at the other side of the river for us to tranship into. The bridge across the river has

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been blown up by the Czechs and is not mended yet. We were told to get all ready packed up to await sleighs, which would be sent for us. We did so and after waiting until evening, we removed all our kit back into the wagons as no sleighs turned up. Hades take the clowns who are in charge of us ! They have done nothing but muddle along since leaving Krasnoyarsk, and they really appear to hamper our progress. This is understandable in a way when it is realised that our Commandant and the Commissar each get 180 roubles per day for the journey from Krasnoyarsk to Irkutsk. If this amount was deducted from their salary for each day, over eight days taken on the journey, we have a shrewd suspicion that we would get along faster. At this station we were able to buy some meat and other stuff and managed to raise some eggs for reels of cotton. They gave us fifteen eggs for one reel. One of the N.C.O.'s wished to get a comb. He could not speak Russian, so he made signs to the shop-keeper that he wanted a comb by drawing his fingers briskly through his hair. The shop-keeper watched these manœuvres for a short while, and then produced some bug powder, and the N.C.O. retired without the comb. This same N.C.O. is a bit of a wag. He on one occasion wished to get some eggs, but could not make the shop woman understand what he required. Seeing a basket of potatoes in the corner of the shop, he went and sat on them, and then got up and cackled, and the intelligent shopwoman produced the required eggs amidst shrieks of applause from a few onlookers.

March 25th.—At nine o'clock this morning five sleighs rolled up, so half our party went off across the river and the remainder waited for the sleighs to return, as the whole lot of us could not get our stuff off on five sleighs. The sleighs returned at 2 p.m., and having loaded up our kit and put the person unable to tramp the distance on to one sleigh, the rest of us set off and walked to the station. It was sloshy going as the warm sun had thawed the snow considerably. We crossed the river close to the broken bridge and walked along the railway to the station. The scenery was lovely. We could look down into the valley from the railway, and the frozen river with a string of sledges going along the ice, with pine forests bordering the river, presented a very pretty picture. On arrival at the station, we found three tiploskas had been set aside for us. We put nine people into the first two tiploskas and the remainder into the third, which we will use as a kitchen car. By a great piece of luck a fast train was due to leave within an hour of our arrival. We obtained permission for our three tiploskas to be attached and we started off at about 9 p.m.

CHAPTER VIII

HELD UP IN IRKUTSK

March 26th.—After travelling fast the whole night and next morning, our train arrived at Irkutsk at 2 p.m. This was the fastest piece of travelling we have done for many months; not since leaving Vladivostock on the express for Omsk have we travelled so fast.

On arrival I went off with an interpreter to see the powers that be to find out when we would go on, but it was too late to see anyone to-day as offices seem to stop work at three o'clock.

March 27th.—We interviewed the Chief of the Siberian Mission and Principal of the Revolutionary Committee. He (it was one and the same person) informed us that he knew nothing whatever about us, and had no power to send us on, and said he would telegraph to Moscow for instructions. We argued away and told him that we had been definitely told that an exchange of prisoners of war had been arranged and that the papers in Krasnoyarsk announced this fact, and also said that the British were leaving Siberia, and on the top of it all the 5th Army Staff had informed us to the effect that we were being sent straight home. All arguments proved useless and bitterly disappointed we made up our minds that we will have to remain here for the time being. Rations were given us to last a fortnight.

Irkutsk is a very much better place than Krasnoyarsk. The River Angara divides the town from the railway, and in winter a crossing is effected over the frozen river.

Every day is practically the same. We daily make enquiries as to whether any news concerning us has been received from Moscow, and each day we receive a reply in the negative. For many weeks I have visited the Soviet Authorities once and sometimes more every day.

Things are quite different here from what they were in Krasnoyarsk. There is not much to worry about here, as we are now officially recognised. I gave orders for the party to put up their shoulder-straps again. In Krasnoyarsk during the first few weeks of our capture we had to lie very low, and when in the streets appear as inconspicuous as possible, and even then

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our people were continually being interfered with. Not a day passes here but we are stopped and asked what shoulder-straps mean, and why we are wearing them against the orders of Soviet Russia. We reply that we are British and have every right to wear them, and as we are now supported by the Authorities we win in the argument when referred to them.

One cannot appear in the streets without attracting a vast amount of attention, and we are all getting used to the feeling of being very much in the limelight. Even during the Kolchak regime we were all very much the centre of attraction in public places, being "foreigners" in Russia, and apparently very interesting foreigners at that. The same people are in existence and cannot quite make out what the British are doing strolling about towns in the hands of the Reds, and the Reds from Central Russia naturally cannot make us out at all. We have made very many friends in a very short space of time, and a good many people come down to the station where we are stopping to see us, and to try and get news about their friends. Strangers stop us and ask us about friends; they imagine, I think, that we are doubtless in a position to tell them all they want to know.

We have actually been to the theatre several times, and have seen some very good shows put on by leading actors and actresses from Petrograd, and have had opportunities of seeing the Russian Ballet. We were given money by the Soviet Government, so are seizing the opportunity of shaking off the monotony of our existence by going to the theatre and imagining for an hour or two that we are in civilisation again. The theatre is always full of the Red Army, and a grimy, smelly lot the majority of them are. It is a great sight to see boxes occupied by workmen and exceedingly dirty looking ragamuffins, and here and there in the stalls and dress circle, one can pick out ladies and officers of the old regime, dressed very plainly. There is no such thing as evening dress or theatre togs about our "tavarish" friends. Everyone these days is referred to as "tavarish," which simply means comrade, and in the pre-revolutionary times the term was a very nice one, but nowadays is cordially hated by the people of the old regime, who emphatically refuse to use the word, but have to put up with dirty bush apes calling them "tavarish" when speaking to them.

We received a telegram from S. that he and Illingworth would leave Klokniavaya on the 5th; we were very glad indeed to hear that I. had recovered. We hear that one of our representatives from the East is coming through to Irkutsk bringing with him

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provisions. This is excellent news and we are very bucked indeed. We asked the local authorities whether two of our party could go East on parole to return with provisions, and they replied and said this could not be done, but that if any of our people East wished to come up and bring us stuff they would be given a safe conduct. Wires were sent off and a reply was received that our representatives were leaving at once for Irkutsk. Cheers !

On the 5th, S. and I. arrived from Klokniavaya, both safe and sound. I. looks very pulled down, but otherwise all right. Most of us did not expect to see him again as he was so very ill. We thought his number was up when we saw him carted off in the sleigh.

We are having a very good time, considering everything. These are indeed bright days compared with the dismal past months. We have taken to going to the Opera and we have seen some very good shows.

April 7th.—At 2 p.m. we saw a train arrive from the East, and on the end of it a carriage and wagon with the Union Jack nailed to the sides and a large British flag flying from the end. We gave a great yell and dashed out and found a British officer, Captain C., whom we had been expecting. He handed us cigarettes to smoke whilst we talked, and we smoked away as if our lives depended on it. He then later on casually asked us whether we would like a drink of whiskey. After getting our breath back, we gasped that we would, and were soon mopping up luscious whiskey, a beverage we had forgotten the taste of.

C. was unable to bring up very much stuff as he had received a wire from the General at Vladivostock not to do so, as a whole wagon load was already being sent us. We swore hard on hearing this. It was only typical of the kind of unnecessary bungling and indifference we had been subjected to all along, and I am afraid our remarks were very bitter, and C. agreed that had he been given a free hand he would have brought us ample stuff to eat and drink, and also clothes, underwear, boots, etc., all of which we were badly in need of.

C. interviewed the Authorities on the subject of our release, but without success, but at last the powers that be agreed to let all the civilians whom we had evacuated go East with the British Delegates.

The river which divides the town from the station is beginning to break up and for several days after the break starts one is cut off from the town. We were all afraid that C. could not transact all the business which he had to do before the ice broke, but

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he has luckily got all the necessary papers for clearing out with the civilians and is off to-morrow.

April 11th.—C. left to-day with the civilians amidst cheers, and a cart-load of thanks from us all. His coming has made a huge difference to us, and the stuff which he brought has greatly helped our scanty larder.

April 12th.—The ice is beginning to form up in piles and no one is allowed to cross it now, so we are cut off from the town. New troops have moved into the town and our shoulder-straps are again the subject for conversation and remarks on the part of the bush apes. C. was tackled before he had been very long in Irkutsk, and was very rudely accosted. He went to the Authorities who promised to issue a notice in the papers stating that we had authority to wear our shoulder-straps. No notice, however, was published.

April 13th.—We are still cut off from the town. The ice has disappeared from the middle of the river and the stream is now clear, and a small ferry has commenced running.

Every day is the same and nothing very exciting happens. Daily people are arrested and hauled off to "jug" and Ministers of Kolchak have been sent to Omsk, where some of them, according to the papers, have been shot.

We go to the theatre frequently these days, and now cause little or no excitement. We have seen some excellent operas, such as *Poliachi*, *Troviata*, *Picka-madama* (The Queen of Spades), *Resalka* (The Mermaid), etc. Also some samples of the Russian Ballet. We have all enjoyed the shows immensely.

The theatre crowd is, of course, extraordinary. The boxes and best seats occupied by workmen and soldiers, mixed up with ex-officers and their wives of the old regime. A special box has been allotted to us, and the theatre people are extremely good to all of us. We have one or two excellent critics with us, and the management are very eager to receive criticism and they say that it is a consolation to them when acting, to know that there are at least a few people in the audience who appreciate good acting and music. A number of famous actors and actresses from Moscow and Petrograd are now in Irkutsk, and we have made friends with some of them. Three of the principal men, all well-known singers, came and had tea with us at the station, and we all had a thundering good evening.

When C. came up, he brought with him a representative of a large American fur firm, who is remaining in Irkutsk, and is negotiating with the local authorities with a view to exchanging goods of all descriptions for furs.

The representative in question, Mr. Boon, has been given

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four beautifully furnished rooms, and he invited four of us to feed up at his place instead of feeding at the station. We accepted with profuse thanks, and we are now running a kind of mess up at B.'s place.

He has engaged two prisoners of war servants to cook and wait at table. Oh, it is absolutely wonderful sitting down to a table with a white cloth, and every other adjunct of the festive board complete. There is also a piano, and music now charms us in the evenings. Things are indeed looking up and our situation at present seems too good to last.

The snow and ice are disappearing. We are all busy with plans and maps for making a break over to the Mongolian frontier. It will be a big business ; during the winter it was absolutely impossible, but by the end of May it is possible, but we shall have to get a flying start of at least twenty-four hours through the thick forests and take with us enough food to last us three weeks, which we reckon will take us to the frontier. Once into Mongolia we hope to be able to get conveyances and get to Urga, and from thence by motor to Pekin.

We have talked and made enquiries and discussed these plans amongst ourselves, but for the present must wait. The situation on the Eastern front is very obscure. It is strongly rumoured that the Japs will declare war and that the " Buffer " State will be west of Krasnoyarsk and also that Partisans and other people like Samianoff are intending to cut the line west of Irkutsk, and a hundred and one other such rumours are being circulated. There have been several disturbances in the town, firing and wholesale arrests. These occur at night. When we have been coming home from the theatre we have been arrested and taken to the Town Commandant where we produced our documents and raised merry hell, but were told that as the patrols could not read and that they had definite instructions to arrest all persons found in the streets at a certain hour, it could not be helped our being roped in along with the rest.

The check of us prisoners, "going for" the Town Commandant ! A few nights ago just as " Georgik " and I were about to round a corner on our way home, we heard a shot close to us. We stopped, and more shots followed, so we walked into the middle of the road from off the pavement, and stood in the moonlight where we could be seen. Persons came running from all directions and yelled to us not to move as apparently they were under the impression that we had fired the shots. We however informed the bush apes that the shots came from round the corner, and as we spoke more shots were fired.

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We then turned off and walked in the opposite direction, and directed persons who came tearing up to us with their revolvers out to where the fun was, and after satisfying themselves we were British officers they darted off. On arrival at the bridge across the river, the patrol was there ready to receive all comers. Without a word we pushed past them on to the bridge. The patrol gaped at us like village idiots, and never dreamt of saying anything, so we walked home. The patrol at the other end of the bridge looked at us closely as "Georgik" who was with me was holding a blood-stained handkerchief to his nose. He is a full blooded large lad and his nose bleeds at the slightest provocation, and apparently the jerk with which we pulled up short of a bullet had been resented by his nose, which showed its disapproval in its usual style.

We got home and assured the "bhoys" who had heard the shots, that we were not punctured. We are getting quite accustomed to these little shows, as most of us have been arrested and dodged trouble not directed at us, and I am very glad no one as yet has stopped a shot in a tender spot intended for someone else. It is too one-sided letting the other man do all the "popping" without being given a run for one's money.

At the theatre last night I saw a fine specimen of a female Bolshevik. She looked about eighteen, with bobbed hair and a good but hard-looking face. She was dressed in a leather jacket and skirt, and a nice-looking six-shooter stuck in her belt. She had a few words with the door-keeper over the question of her seat and she won.

As she sat close to me throughout the performance I was able to watch her and she was out for trouble all right, but no one was particularly anxious to be mixed up in a row with her, so she reigned supreme, hen of the roost. I think she was fascinating and well worth taming, and I think that she is one of the unfortunate people whose parents were unjustly punished under the old regime, and is now getting her own back from the class of people who were responsible for wilful and disgraceful injustice to the working classes and peasants.

Numerous telegrams have been sent off by us in all directions to all kinds of authorities, but from none of our powers-that-be can we get a single reply, nor have we received any communications from any of the British authorities since we were captured. There have been opportunities for getting word through to us, and we have absolute proof of this; yet nothing has been sent us, and no telegram or letter has reached us.

Delegates from other nations who have come up from the East have seen and spoken with our people, and barring telling

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us that a train-load of stuff is coming up for us, we have heard nothing more. Our mail, an accumulation of some ten months, is at Vladivostock, this could have been sent through ten times over, but, doubtless for excellent reasons unknown to us jail-birds, no steps have been taken to send letters or any communication to us.

It is approaching the end of May. It is useless for me to keep up a daily log now, as I would soon fill up a big book if I recorded everything, so will only for the present make notes of things in general. Facts which are unique and worth remembering must be allowed to exist in my memory only. Paper is scarce, and I may have to chuck the whole of this book away, if we have to trek it.

Our guard has been changed. Since living in wagons at Krasnoyask, a guard was furnished, ostensibly to prevent people entering our wagon. The guard has been very useful as they certainly did turn off numerous individuals who insisted on trying to find accommodation in our wagons en route from Krasnoyask to Irkutsk. We soon got our guard to do what we wanted. They fetched wood and carried water and did all kinds of *work* for us, in return for which we gave them cigarettes and tobacco, with which the benign Soviet Government supplied us free.

It was extraordinary how much we received from the Authorities at Krasnoyask towards the end of our stay there. We made many requests, more in the way of a demand, and we got all that we put in for in the way of foodstuffs which could possibly be obtained in the town.

At Irkutsk also we have received extraordinarily good treatment, and have been given quite good food considering the scarcity of stuff and the hard times.

Our old guard were extremely sorry to leave us, and really gave vent to their regrets *in tears*—this is a fact. Our new guard do not quite understand our position and their relation to us. We are going quickly to dispel any misconception as to their duties, and have commenced hand-feeding them by telling them that if they wish to get cigarettes and tobacco they must buckle to and chop up wood, run errands and fetch water, and not lead the idle life. They are obeying orders—what a colossal piece of bluff we're putting up!

I met a man to-day, a Red, who was one of the survivors from the train of death. This train contained some 12,000 people who were kept rigorously shut up in wagons and the train moved from one end of Siberia to the other and back, until *all but sixty died*. I have a photograph of this train with the dead

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VICTIMS FROM THE "TRAIN OF DEATH." TWELVE HUNDRED BOLSHEVIKS
WERE IMPRISONED BY THE WHITE TROOPS IN A TRAIN FOR THIRTEEN MONTHS.
ONLY SIXTY SURVIVED.

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lying outside in rows. The unfortunates who were suspected of being Bolsheviks were arrested and put into the train and not allowed to leave it. Only when persons died were they taken out. The man I met was quite an ordinary individual and he lived in the train for *thirteen months*; this is about the most fiendish thing we have come across—it is no wonder that the Reds are shooting those responsible for this kind of thing, now that such persons have fallen into their hands.

Many terrible things have been brought to our notice. One girl in the office of the Soviet Revolutionary Committee, the wife of the Chief man, who is, of course, a Red, was one of sixty people who were taken away from Irkutsk by General Samianoff (who is head of the Baikal Partisans) as hostages, and put on to one of the ships on Lake Baikal. All were ordered down below, and then an order was given for one person to come up on deck at a time for examination. As each person reached the top of the companion-way they were hit over the head and flung overboard. The girl in question escaped being murdered by revealing to the murderers that she was the wife of a man who was anti-White, and a Bolshevik. This General Samianoff has many awful crimes laid to his door.

Old Boon, who is here, was thrown into prison at Vredivdinsk by General Samianoff because Boon told him to his face that he was a thief and a liar for stealing his furs. Boon was in gaol eight days when he was released by General Samianoff on demands being made for his release by British officers.

I have seen photographs exhibited by the Whites showing the bodies of victims said to have been "done in" and mutilated by the Reds, and now frequently I am shown photos (the identical photographs) which the Reds say are proof of what has been done by the Whites. I pointed out that I had seen the photographs before, and the only conclusion to draw is that these photographs are exhibited publicly for the purposes of Red and White propaganda against each other.

We hear that the Japs have taken Vladivostock and are advancing through the Baikal tunnels towards Irkutsk.

Everyone in the town is very excited and hopes that the Japs will come here. Talk all round about Irkutsk being evacuated, but I think it is all bunkum.

I got a wire off to the Military Attaché at Pekin through the Danish Telegraph Company, and got a reply. I asked the Attaché to ascertain what steps are being taken for our release, also whether the Authorities at Vladivostock are sending any foodstuff through to us, as we know for a fact that a whole train-load of stuff is coming from Vladivostock for us, and

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Danish delegates who have come through from the East say that there are fourteen wagons waiting at Vredivdinsk to come through, and our people in charge of the wagons apparently cannot get any further.

Our guards are now quite tame and fetch and carry beautifully. They are getting quite fond of us, and never fail to salute when we pass them in the town.

There is an Athletic Club here where football is indulged in. Representatives came to us and asked us whether we would play football against the Club.

There are only fifteen of us, and only eleven are in a fit state to play any game. Only three of the eleven have ever played "Soccer," and that was many years ago. A few have played "Rugger," and four never kicked or handled a football.

We accepted the challenge and borrowed a ball and tried to get some practice. We only kicked about for two mornings before the "Match" came off. After a hard but futile struggle we got knocked for 5—nil. Oh, help! However, the "Russkies" don't know how to use their weight, and we floored them frequently, much to the delight of the spectators who did not understand the game at all, but cheered when anyone went a pip. If pips count the spectators gave us the win.

Shortly afterwards we were challenged again and, of course, accepted. Again we took the knock (four goals to one). A good, hard game. The opposing side had quite good combination and a fair sprinkling of Huns and Hungarian prisoners of war in the Russian team. We kept our team exclusively British, but included a Sikh in it. This gentleman has lived in Irkutsk for the past eight years; his brother is in the native cavalry in India, and the man here is also an ex-cavalry man. He plays a very good game of Soccer. I have long chats with him. He is very glad to come and see us, and is very anti-Bolshevik as they have swiped all his goods and chattels and no Arian brother likes that kind of playfulness. Jhit Singh speaks Russian fluently and a little English; so, as my Russian is limited and his English ditto, we fall back on Urdu, which language I have a "smattering" of after eleven years practice at it.

We played football again against an International team consisting of Huns, Austrians and Hungarians—all prisoners of war. It was a tough game, but they, the best team, won 4—2.

We played another match against a Russian team. This team was the best we have been up against. They had played together for some time past, and had been properly coached and their combination was good.

We were out-classed, but we went all out and at every

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opportunity charged and five times out of six sent our opponent flying much to the delight of the crowd, who yelled their approval every time anyone went flying full length on the ground. We have now played all the teams in Irkutsk. We lost the last match 5—3.

There is one established fact now, our opponents funk us, rather than meet a charge they shy off the ball ; we are determined to pull off a game and intend to go on until we do. We have not won any of the half-dozen games we have played. All the games have been clean and fair and both teams have always parted the best of friends, after giving each other the orthodox cheers at the end of the match, a custom, by the way, we apparently introduced.

We met a man who is in a distressing fix. During the big retreat of the White Army, he lost touch with his wife. This happened some twelve months ago. He was informed that she was dead, so a short time ago he married again, and sent his wife off out of Russia to his parents who are living in Switzerland.

After his wife got well started on her journey, he received a letter from his parents to say that the first wife had turned up there some time ago and is looking forward to a reunion with her husband. We are all wondering what will happen at the home of the parents when the second wife turns up to announce her arrival as the new daughter-in-law, and how the two wives will fix up the matter. I give it up—what's the answer ?

Another similar case I know of in Irkutsk has its distressing, and, at the same time, comical, side to it.

A lady, Madame N. got the news that her husband was killed in the recent fighting. Many cases of the kind occur these days, and the poor widows are in a bad way. Madame N. consoled herself to the extent of remarrying. One evening a man knocked at Madame N.'s door and her husband answered the knock. He asked the visitor who he was and what he wanted. He said he was Mr. N. and he wanted Madame N., his wife.

Both the husbands are working for the Soviet Government, and they have each been given a week's leave to straighten the matter out.

The marriage laws under the Soviet Government are unique. If a lad wishes to marry a lass, and she is agreeable, all they do is to write their names in a book and they become man and wife. The performance takes just as long as it takes to write two names in a book.

If at the end of any period commencing from the date of this

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"marriage ceremony" either of the two persons involved wishes to break away, all that it is necessary to do is to go and strike either of the two names off the book in question, and *voilà*, both are free to start all over again. I know of thirty-seven such marriages. Of course, the whole thing is such humbug that quite a large percentage do not bother to go to an office and write their names in a book, but just on agreement become man and wife—"poka" (for the time being), or for all time, just as they like.

We saw a number of prison vans with Admiral Kolchak's Ministers in them being sent to Omsk for trial. Many White officers have lately been sent from Irkutsk to Omsk in wagons and prison vans to be tried by the Head Extraordinary Commission of Siberia at Omsk.

Crowds of the unfortunate men's relatives come down to the station to see them off, and much weeping takes place as the chances are that the prisoners are doomed before trial, to either death or life sentences.

Women are also in the prison vans and wagons, and we see them peering through the bars. These people have served with the Whites, and now that they have fallen into the hands of the Reds they are made to answer for certain acts which the Reds consider are crimes against Bolshevism, and in some cases these White prisoners have been guilty of rough, and sometimes unjust, treatment of workmen and Bolsheviks. Such prisoners know that their days are numbered. No earthly power can save them; after a summary trial the verdict will be what everyone knows already—to be shot.

The Reds have evacuated thousands of Chinamen from this place. The Chinese have settled in parts of Siberia for many years, and do a roaring trade in every branch of industry from selling eggs, fruit and cigarettes, to owning warehouses and cafés.

Now that everything has been nationalised John Chinamen must get out. The Chink is a great speculator and as speculation is one of the things the Reds are "dead against," going so far as to shoot people for speculation, there is nothing left but for the Chink to pack up and depart back to his country—in the vast majority of cases a wealthy gentleman.

I notice that the Persians whom we evacuated from Tiagra are now working as shoeblacks in the streets. They are very happy or appear to be, and they were anxious to clean my boots for nothing—"for services rendered."

They're wily birds, and are anything but on their beam ends. By turning into bootblacks they avoid the attention of the

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Reds, and at a favourable opportunity will make themselves scarce, and they shrewdly suspect that when the time comes for the British Mission to leave Irkutsk for the East, the Persians, being British subjects, of course will claim repatriation also.

The weather is simply gorgeous—very hot indeed, and very dusty in the town.

The woods round Irkutsk are perfect and we wander about in them and continually plan, or try to, some means of escape.

This subject is discussed daily and we have bought maps and made enquiries, very carefully, of course, in all directions.

It would be possible for a small party to get away over to the Mongolian frontier. From there goodness only knows what luck would be met with, as, after getting through the mountains, utterly barren and wild and almost uninhabited territory would have to be negotiated.

Getting from Irkutsk to the frontier, a distance of 400 versts would be the easiest part of the journey—as the villages could be fairly easily avoided and travelling through the forests would only be attempted at night. One would have to lie up during the day, thus avoiding unexpected people and dodging the pursuers. It is absolutely impossible for all of us to get away owing to the physical inability of certain of our officers and men to stand the journey which an escape into Mongolia and beyond would entail.

It is also an established fact that in the event of a few getting away, the remainder would be promptly placed into prison, if nothing worse happened to them.

We have agreed that if any of our party wish to make their escape the rest of us wish them all the luck possible, and are quite willing to stand the racket resulting from their having escaped or even attempted to do so.

However, taking into consideration the fact that we are practically free to wander about, and are in an extremely fortunate position as compared with other people, and have been assured that at any moment we may continue our journey home, via the East, the contemplating escapers have decided to postpone any attempt at escaping for the present. What has put them off more than anything else, and I think the only thing, is the fact that the party remaining would be punished.

I, as O.C. of the party, must remain with the people who cannot budge. I gave permission to any who wished to escape to do so, and only wish that the rest of the fellows were all fit enough to join them. It is a difficult position to be in. First and foremost, a prisoner of war has the right to try and escape,

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and unless ordered otherwise should exercise that right if he can reasonably do so.

In a case such as ours is, all laws of civilisation are ignored—anyone escaping brings down the wrath of our captors on to the heads of the remaining prisoners. The question arose, should anyone try to escape knowing that the people he is leaving behind will be punished for his act, and remembering that we all are free and looked after, and are expecting to leave any day, and the peril of the would-be escapers is very great indeed, do the circumstances justify an attempt at escape, especially as the war is over and officers are not urgently required? Weighing up all these, and a heap of other facts, I gave, as I say, permission to those who wished to make the attempt at escape after carefully laid and complete plans had been made to do so.

Five of us would have given all we possessed to make the attempt had there been no one else to think of or care for.

When at Krasnoyarsk, just before leaving, I wrote a message on a piece of damp silk with an indelible pencil and gave it to a Russian Colonel who was going through the Eastern front line.

This Colonel had made his way from the Archangel front and he made a practice of disguising himself and working his way through the different fronts.

He is a stout fellow, and he introduced himself to me on hearing that there were some British in Krasnoyarsk.

I attended some secret meetings as he had to lie very low in Krasnoyarsk to escape the wholesale arrests, which were made when the house-to-house midnight searches took place. I addressed the message to General B. informing him of our position, and that Colonel Johnson and his party had not been shot, but were all at Omsk.

This message was written on silk and not paper, as when sewn under the lining of a tunic it would not crackle when the tunic was searched for documents.

My information on the silk message was the first intimation that General B. and the authorities East received contradictory to the official report that Colonel J. and party had been killed, which had been sent to England. I was informed of this by Captain C., who actually received the silk message from the Colonel, and he transmitted the contents over the 'phone to General B. who demanded to know on what authority I had made the statement that Colonel Johnson and party were not killed.

As I was a prisoner, of course I could not be communicated with, but my message was accepted as correct and a telegraphic

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contradiction was sent to England to the report that Colonel Johnson and party had been shot.

Boon, our dear old Boon, has left Irkutsk for Moscow. He is on a safe conduct and is negotiating with the Soviet Government about his furs. I really do not know what would have happened to us had it not been for Boon so readily lending us large sums of money which enabled us to exist and buy boots and clothes, which we very badly needed. I hope he does not get into trouble for helping us in the way he has. We are all very grateful to old Boon.*

June 10th.—A man from the 5th Army Staff came down to the station and asked who we were. On being informed, he said that we should wear civilian clothes and not go about the town in full uniform. We replied that we had no civilian clothes.

June 11th.—We were informed by some representative from the 5th Army Staff and the Soviet Revolutionary Committee that a telegram had been received that the Mission had to be sent away from Irkutsk. Tremendous shock and excitement. We tore round trying to find out whether we were being sent East or West, and expressed a very strong desire to be sent East, of course.

This evening we were informed that a telegram had been sent from Moscow ordering us to be sent to England via Moscow. Delighted to hear this, but wished we were being sent East and not through Moscow. Spent the evening saying good-bye to our numerous friends and many of the farewells were indeed sad.

* Extract from a report sent to the Secretary of State for War :—

“ Mr. Boon made a loan to the Mission when he could ill afford it.

“ He knew that he would have to proceed to Moscow, where his position would be very uncertain ; on his arrival there he was very badly treated owing to the fact that the Soviet Government were suspicious of him as he had helped the Mission, and Mr. Boon was sent out of Russia by the Soviet Government who refused to entertain any negotiations.

Mr. Boon took the risk of things turning out badly for him, as they did, but the possibility of this result of his action in helping the Mission did not deter him from doing so.

“ I, on behalf of the Mission, request that Mr. Boon's great assistance to us be recognised by the British Government.”

CHAPTER IX

THROUGH OMSK TO MOSCOW

June 12th.—Left Irkutsk at 2 p.m. and only ran out a few versts where our carriages were detached to await another train. Very dull sitting in the cars, and no one feeling very cheerful.

June 13th.—On our way again, and making good time. We are passing old landmarks. The bridges destroyed by the Czechs have all been repaired, and the country in summer is very lovely. Everything was covered in deep snow last time we passed through here.

June 14th.—Every day is the same. There are provisions to be had at small stations. We have now an International guard, consisting of Hungarians. They are a very different crowd from the Russian guard which had always been with us. Our present guard do not fetch and carry for us, but they do not attempt to interfere with us in any way. At stations where there is a halt we take the football out and kick it around, much to the interest of the local inhabitants. Provisions such as curds and whey, butter, Bologna sausages, and bread are plentiful, and fairly cheap, and we gorge ourselves on these things.

We hear that the nearer we get to Omsk the scarcer food becomes, so we propose laying in a good supply whilst our funds hold out.

June 15th.—We are making fairly good time. We are attached to a goods train, but the old 'bus rattles along fairly well. The country is lovely, midsummer now, and the sun very hot in the middle of the day. The flies are very numerous and trouble us a good deal in the carriages. Some of us have sewn together cloth and pieces of muslin and have hung them over our bunks. The flies take a lot of defeating, and one or two manage to get in, but they either quickly get out or go under.

June 16th.—Same as yesterday, nothing of interest to write about. We shall pass through all our old places, such as Krasnoyarsk, Aichinsk, where the explosion was, and Novo Nik. We are in a great hurry to get on, and sincerely hope we shall not be held up at Omsk.

June 17th.—Had a fairly good run to-day and played about with the football. We kill time playing patience. I never thought we should have to resort to this. Time dragged so

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dreadfully this evening we had a game of snap, and got quite excited over it. I hope it will not occur again. Such excitement may keep us awake at night.

June 18th.—We were held up to-day to allow a train load of bush apes to pass. Drat the delays. One day is the same as the other. We generally manage to have a go at the football, and we visit the stalls at the station and see what we can buy in the shape of foodstuff.

June 19th.—Made a better run to-day. We hope to be in Omsk in another two or three days. We have passed the spot at which we were captured, and we regarded it with silent interest. Lots of Red soldiers are about, and we are never without a group of them staring at us. We are absolutely accustomed to everyone staring at us, and the feeling of being in a glass case like some curiosity is an old one. All the same, it will be a tremendous relief to get back home, and once more walk along the streets unnoticed, instead of everyone stopping and turning round, and a crowd forming the moment we stop for anything.

June 20th.—We are making good way, and will be in Omsk shortly. We are all tremendously bucked up, as the Commandant who is in charge of us says that we shall not be held up in Omsk, but shall be hurried through by a good train from Omsk to Moscow, and from thence onwards to England without delay. It seems too good to be true ; we were also informed in Irkutsk officially that we would not be held up in either Omsk or Moscow, as we were going straight home to England.

June 21st.—Numerous troop trains have held us up, but we shall certainly be in Omsk to-morrow, and with any luck shall be attached to a passenger train from there, and be whisked on to Moscow. It is very hot in the train, but cool enough when moving.

June 22nd.—We arrived in Omsk early this morning, and our Commandant has gone up to the town to see the Authorities, and we anxiously await his return.

The Commandant returned late this evening and said that he had to go back up to the Authorities to-morrow morning, and meanwhile requested us to remain at the station until something definite is known as to what is to happen.

June 23rd.—We have to remain in Omsk a few days as the powers-that-be here say that they have received no information from Moscow regarding us. Obviously someone is lying ; either the people at Irkutsk or the man here. I will go up to-morrow and see the " top side No. 1 fellow," and get something definite out of him.

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June 24th.—We saw the top dog, and informed him that the man at Irkutsk informed us that a wire had been received from Moscow ordering that we should be sent there at once, and we were also informed that we should not be detained in Omsk. He replied that he had received no orders about us, and as he was all powerful in Siberia, being President of the Siberian Revolutionary Committee, we would have to remain in Omsk until he heard from Moscow. He went on to say that if he sent us to Moscow we should only be imprisoned until such time as Moscow was ready to send us on, and as he did not wish that to happen, he would keep us on his own responsibility in Omsk for the present.

We left him, cursing heavily. Before leaving he told us that we must not walk about the town in uniform, but must get civilian clothes or as an alternative take down our shoulder straps. We have no intention of adopting the latter alternative at this stage of the game, so we intend to get civilian coats.

June 25th.—We have applied to the Authorities for food tickets and after interviewing numerous Committees, two of which suggested that we should work, we were placed in the third category as regards food. This means that each man person will receive $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of black bread a day, and *nothing whatsoever else*. I put in an application to the Authorities asking whether it was correct that prisoners of war would only receive $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of bread per day, and received a reply to the effect that I had correctly interpreted their decision. As we have not the slightest intention of doing any kind of work for the benign Soviet Government, we ignored the generous offer of a $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of bread and lived on the supplies we had purchased.

As we had money also, and could buy stuff at the stalls in the bazaar, we lost no sleep over the incident, which we considered closed.

June 26th.—We met two American reporters who arrived from Vladivostock and are travelling through Siberia into Russia for the purpose of obtaining Bolshevik dope. These two are conducted by Commissars to all kinds of places and shown the wonders worked by the local powers, and are much impressed, though unfavourably.

They had, before arriving in Siberia, formed quite a good impression as to the aims and intentions of the Soviets, but these impressions are undergoing a rapid change. We predict that before the two reporters have been much longer in this country, their sympathetic attitude will receive a series of severe shocks.

The peasants and workmen with whom we chat freely, have not a single good word to say about the present Government

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and foam at the mouth when asked how they like the idea of embracing Communism.

June 27th.—We are killing time as best we can, but it is damnable. Omsk is an awful place and all decent people have disappeared and only the ragtag and bobtail community parade the streets and lounge in the public gardens. Of course, all shops are shut and only the Bazaar in the Market Square sell a few articles at exorbitant prices. People are afraid to go to the Market Place as the square is frequently raided by soldiers making a ring round it suddenly with the object of catching out speculators and arresting people who have not proper papers in their possession.

June 28th.—Strolled about all day ; nothing whatsoever to do. Time drags very heavily. We know no one in this town and there is no hope of seeing any shows. The gardens are not worth going to, as only the most disreputable riff-raff patronise the public gardens.

June 29th.—We bought some "kumis," which is mare's milk doctored up. Kumis is made by the Kurgese and the exact preparation of kumis is a secret kept by them. The milk is kept in goat-skin bottles and ferments until it is as fizzy as champagne. Kumis, if drunk freely, affects the head like alcohol, and as we are unable to obtain any kind of throat varnish whatsoever we indulge in kumis and get quite a glow on at times.

Kumis is an excellent beverage for the health, and contains all kinds of wonderfully good properties.

June 30th.—Nothing new. We go bathing in the river every day, and this keeps us from pegging out through sheer *ennui*. The two American reporters came bathing with us also. They are both very good fellows, and are going on to Moscow shortly. We hope to leave as soon as the expected wire is received from Moscow.

July 1st.—We went round to see some Danes who are here. They also hope to be leaving for Moscow shortly. We have been to see several officials but can get no satisfactory replies from them. We heard that General T., the father of two very great friends of ours in Irkutsk, two Russian girls, has been shot. The two girls are left stranded, and were depending on rejoining their father. Goodness only knows what the unfortunate girls will do now. This is only one of very many such instances. Old Generals and their wives, and young girls and hundreds of innocent people are being stood against the wall in front of a firing party, and finished off with revolvers and bayonets if the bullets do not do the work properly. The

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only offence committed by hundreds of people, men, women and youngsters, who are "done in," is that they have been officers who have fought against the Red Army, or who have in any way helped the struggle against the wave of Bolshevism sweeping over Russia. A day of reckoning is coming when these people backed by the workmen and peasants will kill off the Jews who are at the head of the whole movement. With very few exceptions indeed, the present state of affairs is the work of the Russian Jews who are supported by Polish Jews and Letts, and these are the people who are mainly guilty of ruthless butchery and wholesale massacres. Never in the history of Russia has such murderous shooting and slaying of people taken place.

July 2nd.—Went bathing again. The sun is so very hot in the morning and afternoon that we wait until evening to bathe. The last time we were at Omsk it was winter, and snow lay thick on the ground.

July 3rd.—Still no news of our moving on. Every day is the same, strolling about in the town and bathing in the evening, and cards at night. I wonder when we will move on.

July 4th to 12th.—Nothing fresh at all. We have been up to see the officials again, but as yet no telegram has been received from Moscow. We are told that when a telegram is received we shall be sent on quickly and shall not be detained in Moscow. As it is more advisable to keep us out of Moscow until the Soviet Government is ready to send us straight over the frontier, we are held up in Omsk.

July 13th.—We heard to-day that a wire has been received from Moscow and we are to be sent on there. Hurray! We hope to leave this evening, and our cars have already been shunted out of a siding ready to be attached to a train.

July 14th.—We left Omsk this morning and are fairly buzzing along, and should be in Chliabinsk to-morrow.

Foodstuff is not quite so plentiful as it was east of Omsk. The peasants and workmen we talk to daily are very bitter indeed against the present Government. They were led by Bolshevik propaganda and promises to believe that they would receive all kinds of things in the way of better wages, a freer life, lighter work, all kinds of comforts they had never dreamt of receiving on this earth, etc., etc., and in consequence, since the peasants and workmen were disgracefully treated by the White Army and as they thought that nothing could be worse than the conditions existing under the White regime, they could not do better than pray for the coming of the Red Army, and therefore when opportunities occurred the peasants and work-

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men materially assisted the Reds to defeat the Whites in a hundred and one ways possible in an area occupied by an army, the civil population of which area is actively hostile to that army.

July 16th.—We arrived at Chiliabinsk and hope to push in from here some time this evening.

Our Commandant of the guard has papers with him for Moscow and he informs us that we shall only remain in Moscow a few days.

This information tallies with what the Soviet Government Authorities in Irkutsk and Omsk tell us, so we are very happy to think that, after all these weary months of waiting, we at last will be released in the near future.

We have not received a single message from the outside world since, and in fact, long before our capture, and we read in the Bolshevik newspapers about dreadful revolutions which are not only taking place in England, but all over the world and we wonder sometimes whether we shall ever get out of Russia and Siberia.

July 17th.—We left Chiliabinsk last night and are now speeding along towards the Ural Mountains which divide Russia from Siberia.

The railway line from Omsk to Chiliabinsk is a single one, and from Chiliabinsk onwards it is doubled.

A most extraordinary incident took place this afternoon. Our train, which was a troop train, was travelling at thirty miles an hour and we were sitting on the steps of our carriage when we heard a revolver shot fired.

Our carriage was in the front of the train, and on looking back we saw soldiers jumping out of the wagons in twos and threes and, out of certain wagons, in bunches.

The train was at the time travelling along a high bank and the soldiers were turning somersaults and rolling down the steep bank.

We were astounded and could not make out what was the matter.

The engine driver did not notice anything was wrong and kept the train going for fully five or ten minutes, by which time some 200 to 300 men had leapt from the fast-travelling train.

When the train came to a halt, on the driver noticing something was wrong, we all got out and our guard seized their rifles and prepared for action.

We all got out also to see what the whole thing was about. On making enquiries we discovered that one of the soldiers in the wagons noticed a train coming from the opposite direction

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round a bend, and forgetting that it was a double line, he fired his revolver to draw the attention of all his comrades to the fact that a "head-on" collision was inevitable.

The startled men all jumped to their feet and with one wild look at the oncoming train sprang out of the wagons for dear life, and after rolling many yards down the steep incline, and examining themselves for broken bones, saw the train from the opposite direction glide past their own train on the down line.

The man who had fired the revolver and thus gave the alarm bolted across the fields but was chased and brought back.

The extraordinary fact remains that not a single person received any injuries save a few bruises, and the relief felt by all concerned was so great that a howl of laughter was let loose and the alarmist was let off with a warning.

We notice as we pass along in the train that all the factories are closed and standing idle. In the fields peasants are working, and two train loads of girls—nothing but girls—have passed our train.

These girls have been sent from Central Russia to work in the fields in Siberia. The peasants are forced to do a certain amount of work. As they are not allowed to own any ground or sell any of the products from their fields, they are very dissatisfied, and want to know why they should work for other people.

The peasants say they will only cultivate sufficient ground to meet with the immediate wants of their families, and will not cultivate fields for other people's sole benefit.

The Bolsheviks tell the peasants that they must cultivate a certain amount of land and each person must produce so much stuff as is ordered. In return for the corn produced they will be given material, and other necessities of life.

The peasants are thus compelled to produce the corn, and in return receive—nothing. There is nothing to give.

The Russian peasant cannot live without vodka. It is a national curse, but a fact for all that.

The two largest buildings in any Russian or Siberian town are the prison and the Government vodka factory.

The Soviets have now strictly prohibited the manufacture of vodka by private persons.

When the peasants could not buy vodka they manufactured it. Now they are not allowed to do so, and since the peasant cannot live without vodka the outcry against the prohibition of the sale of this liquor is very bitter indeed.

I have on countless occasions, in the time of the Whites, seen long queues of old men, women, and tiny children standing in

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cold drenching rain for hours, with all kinds of vessels in their hands, waiting for their turn to buy vodka from a Government factory. In those times these same people would refrain from standing for five minutes in a queue for bread. The Russian peasant was a wealthy person, and in his dirty happy-go-lucky way did himself very well. He knew nothing of what was happening outside his own particular village, and what is more, cared less.

Now, under the regime of the Bolshevik and Communist, the peasants find they have to do all kinds of things they never had to do before, and are being worried and harassed to produce corn and farm produce, and when they demand payment are lectured on the blessings which accompany Communism.

One thing is a certain fact. The Russian peasant will not embrace Communism unless one changes the nature of the beast, and it will be easier for a leopard to change its spots than for anyone to change the character of the peasant.

Communists who have visited the villages have been killed, and regiments ordered out to punish these villages have refused to do so.

The peasant is already demanding the return of his landlord. The promise of "free land" by the Bolsheviks, entails the free taking of what the free land produces.

We are passing through the Ural Mountains. They are very lovely, but not impressive as compared with other famous mountains.

The town of Samara looks very fine from the train; the inhabitants are very proud of Samara, and good cause they have to be, as it is a fine, big, clean town and, to crown all, possesses a tramway.

One of the American reporters missed his train from Omsk, and as our train was the next to follow he has come along with us. We are all very pleased to have him, as he is a very good fellow, and we all like him. Both these reporters are good chaps, quite a different kidney from our American engineer friends; but, then, I think, the engineers were not Americans any more than the Bengalee is an Englishman.

We passed over the famous Volga River this morning. It is a magnificent river, and we were much impressed by it.

All the bridges are guarded, and no one is allowed to have a carriage door or window open, whilst passing over a bridge.

We expect to be in Moscow to-morrow, having done the journey from Omsk in eight days, which is record going in these days.

We are all very excited at the thought of getting out of Russia,

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and hope that we shall go on from Moscow to Petrograd with only a very short halt, and from thence to Reval or Riga, and on to dear old Blighty.

July 21st.—We arrived at Moscow this morning, and our Commandant took his papers up to the Soviet Authorities.

He returned this afternoon and informed us that orders for our onwards journey would be received to-morrow, and asked us to keep near the train, which was placed in a siding, as we had no papers in our possession and persons who have no papers are liable to be arrested and imprisoned without any enquiries being made.

July 22nd.—A dirty looking scallywag came down to see us this morning.

He told us that he was arranging a transport to take our luggage, and ourselves, up to the Soviet Authorities. We do not like the look of this at all, and as King, the American Reporter, is on quite a different footing from us, and has to leave us here, I think I will have more chance of getting the diary out of the country if I get him to take charge of it, as he has got a safe conduct, and will be leaving Moscow shortly and offered to take this diary with him. I do not want to lose this diary, and as all papers might be confiscated, I am handing this over to King, and I will continue, from where I leave off here, in another book. Here's luck to the old book getting away safely. If King has to give it up, I will have a good fight to get it back.

CHAPTER X

PRISONERS IN THE IVANOFFSKI MONASTERY

Diary Continued.

About 2 p.m. a motor lorry arrived to take our luggage up into the town.

As only half of us could go at a time, we divided ourselves and our luggage up into parties.

The lorry took the first party up and then came back for the rest of us.

We piled up our stuff on to the lorry and then clambered up and sat on the top of it, and drove off through the town.

After going for about fifteen minutes the lorry pulled up outside two heavy large gates, which were guarded by soldiers of the terrible Extraordinary Commission, and as soon as the gates were opened to receive us we saw our advance party sitting on their luggage, which was stacked in the courtyard, surrounded by an armed guard.

The spectacle did not cheer us up by a long chalk, but we managed to make jokes about prison fare being scanty and how soldier-like the bush apes looked with their head-gear something after the style of a Hun helmet with spikes, only entirely made from dark blue cloth with an enormous five-pointed red star in the front.

We noticed many faces looking at us from behind barred windows, and suddenly recognised the lady who had acted as interpreter and secretary to a friend of ours at Irkutsk, regarding us very sorrowfully also from behind a barred window. She shook her head and made a sign of a rope round the neck and over a beam. We tried to speak to her but were promptly prevented from doing so by our guard, who would not let us move a foot from the spot where we sat.

Shortly after this we saw King, accompanied by a Commissar, pass through the courtyard. We exchanged a few cheerful words with him. He informed us that he was not under arrest, and in the event of the Mission being sent to prison he would make every endeavour to come and see us if he was able to do so.

After sitting on our luggage for about two hours, an order

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came for five of us to collect a few things which we would require for the night, and to follow a sentry.

The five senior officers went first. We were conducted into the Search Office, and after furnishing our names, were thoroughly searched, and all money which was in our possession and all documents were confiscated.

I, as first on the list, was ordered to give up my silver cigarette case, my safety razor, and a few other such like small articles. The cigarette case was a valued gift, and my razor a necessity, so I told the Commissar that I intended to shave every morning, and required my cigarette case, etc., and would not hand them over.

He, therefore, consulted the Chief of the Vetcheka, as the Headquarters of the Extraordinary Commission is called, and I was allowed, as were the others of our party also, to retain these small articles.

After being searched we were conducted to a room some 12 feet by 18 feet and told to stop there. I asked the Commissar the meaning of the whole procedure, and he informed me that we would remain in Moscow a few days only before being sent on out of Russia, and that meanwhile as we could not be allowed free about the town we would be kept in a laager.

When passing through the courtyard to the room we informed the others that everyone was going to be searched, and they at once, under the eyes of their guards, tucked away what money and articles they were afraid of losing into the corners of boxes and different parts of the baggage.

In about five hours the whole party had been searched and we were then all concentrated in the one room in which there were plank beds.*

We obtained hot water and made tea and tackled some of the foodstuff which we had with us. After a slight repast we produced our musical instruments and had a little sing-song to celebrate our most unfortunate position.

The guards were astounded at our behaviour, and what the prisoners in the cells must have thought of music proceeding from any part of the Vetcheka can best be imagined.

As the hour was late, we were informed that we would be sent to the laager in the morning, so we informed the Commissar that we required our baggage and bedding. He allowed us to

* Extract from an Interim Report of the Committee (Lord Emmott as chairman) to collect information on Russia, presented to Parliament by command of His Majesty.

"More than one witness has likened the prison of the Extraordinary Commission to the Black Hole of Calcutta."

THE IVANOFFSKI MONASTERY

fetch in all our stuff from the courtyard and we promptly started to rearrange our stuff.

In the middle of our labours some Commissars came in, and demanded that every document we had in our possession and in our baggage must be forthwith handed over to them.

I had a very large quantity of official stuff and as I had no intention of handing this over, I gave the Commissar some scraps of unimportant papers and kept quiet about the stuff in my box.

As none of the bush apes could read English they did not know what was being handed to them, and after they had departed I quietly destroyed anything I did not wish them to see. Whilst being searched five at a time in the small room, Horrocks managed to read a letter which our train Commandant had brought from Omsk, written by M. Podlonoffsky, the head of the Siberian Extraordinary Commission, and addressed to the head of the Vetcheka in Moscow.

The letter stated that we were the British Mission from Siberia, and that we had enormous sums of money in our possession and had never been searched.

We already owed M. Podlonoffsky a debt of gratitude, as he promptly sat on our bluff on arrival in Omsk.

Up to that time we had managed to bounce nearly every Red official we came in contact with, so much so, that when getting orders for food supplies, Committees would stand up to receive our deputations, who were promptly received, though long queues were formed long before their arrival.

Friend Podlonoffsky told us when we visited him at Omsk that the proper place for the Mission was the prison, and when we informed him that we were told we were going straight to Moscow, and would not be detained in Omsk, he replied that he would keep us in Omsk until he received orders from Moscow, and moreover he took full responsibility for keeping us there, and we could tell our Government anything we wished to, and that we could either work or live on half a pound of black bread a day.

He was the only Red who did not seem to be afraid of any other Red. He was the President of Committee which tried Admiral Kolchak's Ministers, and shot five out of eight of them. Podlonoffsky is a Lettish Jew, and a thoroughly murderous and vindictive Bolshevik. We all prayed for a return match with Podlonoffsky and if ever the boot is on the other leg Podlonoffsky will then find that there are many members of the Mission who would like to talk poetry to him.

July 23rd.—At ten o'clock this morning a Commissar

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came along and told us to get a few things together which we could carry with us, as we were to march off to the laager.

He was informed that we could not carry our things and that, with the exception of heavy boxes which we did not require for the present and some sacks of flour, we would require the rest of our stuff, and this would necessitate two carts being procured. After some arguing, he despatched a bush ape to fetch two carts which on arrival were loaded up with our kit and all kinds of pots and pans. I think our kit was the most extraordinary looking collection of rubbish I have ever seen, consisting of cooking stoves, tin chimneys for the stoves, cooking pots and pans of every description, sheepskin coats and a hundred and one disreputable looking bags and boxes all mixed up in a heap on the two carts.

I must mention here that whilst we were in Omsk a tiny Siberian puppy, when crossing the railway line close to our carriage, had its hind leg and tail run over by an engine. One of our officers, Captain Prickett, skilfully amputated the hind leg below the knee, which was hanging by a piece of skin, and bound up the tail. Teddy, as the pup was named, made a rapid recovery, and now can scamper at a great pace on three legs, and being a very pretty fluffy little thing, full of life and tricks, was soon a great favourite with everyone. We were formed up into two ranks, and then formed fours, and with the two baggage carts leading, we marched out of the Vetcheka surrounded by the Red Guards into the streets, one of the N.C.O.'s carrying Teddy. We marched through the main square of Moscow and through a few of the principal streets, creating quite a mild sensation, as the public could not make out the scene at all. We were all in full uniform, and Sam Browne belts, and there was no mistaking that we were prisoners of the Reds, but people wondered at what we were doing in Moscow and were puzzled to know on which of the fronts we were captured. In about twenty minutes we arrived at the gates of the laager.

We noticed that there was a guard of sentries posted all round the high wall surrounding the laager which had barbed wire on top.

The gates were opened to admit the carts and we all trooped in after them, and the gates were banged to after us, and *voilà* ! we were in "jug." The laager was the Ivanoffsky Monastery, supposed to be one of the cleanest and richest monasteries in Moscow. When we arrived in, we were soon the object of much curiosity, and prisoners crowded round us. There were some women prisoners who spoke to us from the steps of their

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quarters, but as the order regarding speaking to prisoners of the opposite sex is very strict, the women were ordered to go to their rooms.

After unpacking our kit, we were told to occupy a small room for the night until such time as we had bathed and been disinfected. This room was the disinfection and quarantine room.

We had a bath in the prison laundry, by standing in the small tubs which the women used to wash clothes in, and rubbing ourselves all over with hot water and soap.

After we had all had a bath we went to the Commandant's office and registered ourselves, and were then given three small rooms about twelve feet by eight feet to pack ourselves into.

There were seventeen all told, as besides fourteen British we had two Hungarian officers who were prisoners of war and did the cooking and worked for us ; also a German who did the heavy work.

We put five people in each of two rooms and in the third room, which was a little larger than the other two, seven persons were installed. We roared with laughter sometimes to think that we, prisoners, should successfully have demanded of the Reds to supply other prisoners to wait upon us.

Of course, the Hungarians and German were overjoyed when we obtained permission from the Reds for them to be employed by us. We had only one private who could cook and when our Chinese left us we were badly stumped to know what to do.

I put the case up to the 5th Army Staff at Krasnoyarsk and they consented to the three men coming with us, and in return for their most valuable and indispensable services I promised to do my best to get them out of the country.

These three men had been prisoners in Siberia for nearly six years and had no prospects of being repatriated, so when the chance of being taken out of Russia was offered them, the poor fellows nearly wept with joy and gratitude. One Hungarian comes from a very well known old family in Hungary and the other is a doctor of law and a 'varsity coach. The German is just a big typical German private soldier and works like a Trojan.

I am very sorry for these three chaps, as they are now landed in "jug," but they say that in any case they would not be any better off, and we all still have hopes that we shall not be here long.

Imagine the heart-breaking bitter disappointment this imprisonment means to us all.

For weary months we have daily been waiting to be sent home.

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Promise after promise has been made to us that we should shortly be sent home, and these promises were from the highest in the land. We invariably made the best of a bad job and kept as cheerful as we could, knowing that no good could possibly result in moping and being down in the dumps, and now just as we all really thought that we should soon see old England and our people and friends, who have suffered tortures on learning of our capture, and in many cases supposed us dead, we are thrust into prison.

Still we hope, and are determined to grin.

Everyone in this laager has to work.

July 30th.—There are 457 prisoners, of whom forty-five are women and girls. The prisoners chiefly consist of hostages and counter-revolutionaries and speculators.

No mention of work has been made to us. We are determined to refuse to work for the Reds, and we are tired of them asking us to do so.

We have to be very careful with our food. I am going to ask the Prison Commandant for permission to go to the Vetcheka and bring away the flour, etc., which we left there.

The prison fare is slow starvation. We get three-quarters of a pound of black bread in the morning, and at midday some boiled grain known as *khassa*.*

* Extract from Lord Emmott's Interim Report :—

"In the Ivanoffsky prison—the food issued to the prisoners is stated in the Report in question to be 'below starvation norm'; even the food for the sick was insufficient, sanitary conditions were completely unsatisfactory, the rooms were filthy, ventilation was insufficient, and the arrangements for washing linen worked badly. . . ."

"We have arrived at the following conclusions :—

"(a) That the majority of British subjects were arrested without trial and without reason assigned.

"(b) That these British subjects so imprisoned, together with others charged with political offences, were treated with calculated brutality and subjected to terrible physical and mental suffering.

"(c) That no attempt was made to differentiate between the treatment in prison of British prisoners and of hardened and notorious criminals.

"(d) That with regard to British subjects, the Soviet Government systematically ignored the obligations of justice and humanity.

"(e) That the Soviet Government proved themselves incapable of discharging the responsibilities towards British subjects detained in Russia which the successful revolution had placed in their hands."

We have, etc.,

EMMOTT, *Chairman*.

ELLIS W. HUME-WILLIAMS.

W. RYLAND D. ADKINS.

D. WATTS MORGAN.

E. E. GARLE, *Secretary*.
November 4th, 1920.

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In the evening we get watery soup made from highly flavoured fish or meat, sometimes horse flesh.

This menu varies. Sometimes we get the thin soup at midday and the khassa in the evening.

It is most fortunate for us that we have some flour at the Vetcheka, as we are very hungry all day, and are careful to keep a piece of the black bread for the last thing at night. Breakfast consists of the black bread, and we put a little sugar on it to give it a taste. We fortunately are fairly well off for tea which we brought with us, but are going carefully with it and are very grateful to have it even though without milk or sugar.

July 31st.—Permission has been received for one officer to go to the Vetcheka and fetch our remaining foodstuffs.

We are on very low rations now—the prison menu, which is strictly “table d’hôte,” is getting worse.

Great bartering takes place, as every kind of foodstuffs has its value in kind.

A dried herring is the lowest value of anything. These fish must have been dried at the time when the flood subsided and the ark grounded. They are like strips of shrivelled leather, and the smell from them is enough to blow the top of one’s head off.

It is difficult to cook them, but the Russians tell us that they should be wrapped in paper and then put into a fire.

As soon as the paper has burnt itself out, the fish is ready for eating.

Our party wag suggested that it was undoubtedly the best way to cook the fish and went on to say that having wrapped the fish in paper and burnt it, the fish should be thrown away and the paper eaten.

Think of the nourishing and delicious soup which these dear fish provide. It is surprising, considering their many advantages and good looks, that they should be at the bottom of the value list of the food commodities.

A herring and a half (this is nothing to do with that schoolboy riddle) can purchase a “pika” of sugar, a “pika” is about a tablespoonful.

Two “pikas” of sugar fetch half a “foont” of bread, a “foont” being the Russian pound.

Two eggs fetch a foont and a half of bread.

“Tobacco” and cigarettes made from any filth and from roots of trees and bark can be had for a price.

Prisoners have relatives and friends in the town who are free, and these relatives and friends bring in foodstuffs to the laager every Sunday, which is visiting day.

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I will describe one of these visiting days anon. Of course, no such things as eggs, butter, meat, cigarettes or tobacco, or anything save grain, black bread, and fish can be had from the Prison Authorities, so the bartering takes place for articles brought into the prison privately.

Old ex-White Generals, ex-Lord Mayors of Petrograd, and other large towns, Governors of Provinces, Princes and "Excellencies" are all our neighbours in distress and these old and respectable gentlemen of whom I shall have something to say in due course, visit us at our rooms with the herrings, sugar, tobacco, and cigarettes, and their one demand in exchange is bread, bread, give us bread.

Poor old chaps, hungry, wild eyed, thin and weak, they want something substantial to fill the gnawing pain inside—the gritty black bread will do it if they can get enough of it. They think we have enough and to spare. I wish to God we had; we know what the hunger pain feels like twenty-four hours in the day.

It is with great difficulty that I can maintain this diary. The prisoners are apt to be searched at any moment, and no one is supposed to have any documents or papers.

I have managed to hide paper, and when I get a chance I write down what is occurring.

I have given up recording the days; they drag, and no one day stands out from the others, so as incidents occur I note them down.

In Moscow there are many monasteries, and these have been converted by the Reds into prisons, in which are confined all people whom the Reds have cause to believe are not "Red" or who have in any way helped the Whites. Also there are in these prisons, people who have speculated, and hostages.

There are all kinds of people in this laager. Men of high rank whose only crime is that they are "bourgeoisie" or aristocrats, are in prison for life. There are also murderers imprisoned here, and others who have tried to make a little money by speculating.

Hostages are imprisoned as a safeguard against their relatives escaping out of Russia. Certain people are given work in the town and to deter such people from escaping, their wives, mothers, brothers, sisters, etc., are kept in prison. In the event of any worker escaping the hostages are promptly shot.

Our Laager Commandant is an ex-tailor and his wife was a kitchen-maid in a cheap restaurant.

They live in fine style, and are lords of all they survey. The Commandant is always very polite and civil when I go to see

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him, but I have heard him bawling the head off prisoners for doing things they ought not.

The Assistant Commandant is an ex-sailor, a youth of about twenty or twenty-one. He is quite a decent lad, and understands as much the reason for his being a Red as a red cow understands the reason for its colour. He was a sailor, and the Kronstad sailors started the Revolution, so our friend the Assistant Commandant was swept in as a Red. I think he has a soft spot in his heart for the Mission. He allows us to do a great many things others are not allowed to.

Our stuff was fetched from the Vetcheka. Other prisoners told us that we had no chance of getting permission to fetch it, but two of our officers accompanied by a bush ape have got the stuff.

Against all rules we are cooking our stuff in the laager kitchen. It is a treat to get something to eat in the way of a stew, and we have got permission from the Commandant to get some of our flour baked in the town. Jove, fancy white bread ! We will all throw a fit after all the black gritty bread we have been eating.

We are getting very tired of the eternal khassa ; grain, grain, grain, boiled into a sloppy mash day after day, yet we are so hungry that we devour eagerly all that is supplied us and feel very much like *Oliver Twist* did, only that it is useless asking for more. Now I must describe the laager, our daily routine, and some of our fellow jail birds.

This prison was a monastery and the rooms we are quartered in were the small rooms occupied by the monks. There are three separate buildings enclosed by a high wall, making an oblong.

The church faces the main entrance, and one of the wings, extending the whole length of the oblong, consists of the Commandant's offices and living quarters.

Opposite to this wing is the male prisoner's quarters forming the opposite wing, and facing the Church at the opposite end of the oblong are the women's quarters, under which is the laundry.

In the men's quarters is a room which has been turned into a Lecture Hall and a Theatre.

Twice weekly, on Saturdays and Sundays, the prison amateur dramatic society puts on plays and variety entertainments, and very good they are too.

Without this theatre I think we would go off our heads.

The Theatrical Society asked the Mission to put on a show during one of the week-ends.

In our party we are lucky in having Sergeant Rooney, who is a well-known star in the theatrical world of London, and the Mission wag.

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Rooney wrote a play and had it translated into Russian, in which he made me the principal figure.

The show went off with great éclat, and the Commandant and his assistant and the leading theatre stars rushed round to the dressing-room and wrung my hand and congratulated me. It was indeed a proud moment, and the play was repeated. The author was shouted for and deafening applause greeted his appearance on the stage.

Rooney is a marvel on the piano ; he does not read a note of music but can play without a mistake any intricate classical piece, or play ragtimes with his own variations if one only whistles the tunes once over to him.

The prison also boasts of a library, where some very interesting books can be borrowed. There is also a bookbinding shop and a tailor's, a watchmaker's, a bootmaker's, and a carpenter's shop.

Everyone in the laager, women included, does some kind of work. Men who are too old for manual work get posts in the library, and as doorkeeper in the theatre. Other old and highly respected ex-Mayors and Generals are given a broom and they quietly and sedately brush up the leaves in the small garden, which is situated in the centre of the enclosure. Some of them wear their morning coats and no hats when doing the sweeping.

The members of the Mission do absolutely no work whatsoever.

It is a very strict order, as I have already stated, prohibiting persons of the opposite sex talking to each other.

Exceptions are made in the case of the "artistes" or theatrical performers. The Mission to a man have almost become first-class artistes, though if they were asked what their particular bent in this line is the reply would be "I'm blowed if I know." Others of the Mission who cannot flatter themselves to the extent of imagining themselves "stars" on the stage have developed a keenness for learning Russian, and have obtained permission from the Commandant to be taught Russian by one of the fair sex for an hour every day. I belong to the latter category.

An unfortunate incident occurred the other day.

One member of the Mission was seen talking to a fairy when no theatre or Russian class was in progress, and a jealous Russian who adored the fairy, sneaked to the Commandant, with the result that the gay member of the Mission went into solitary confinement. So did the fairy. The solitary cells are always occupied by persons who infringe the rule against gay dogs and fairies talking to each other, and both are similarly punished when caught.

As the solitary cells are adjoining, and only a wooden door

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separates the cells, the interrupted conversation can be continued from their respective cells, though under somewhat depressing conditions.

Our gay dog and the fair lady are both artistes, and were let out for a show in which they were dancing together.

A great howl of delight lasting some five minutes greeted their appearance on the stage, much to their mutual embarrassment. Both returned to their cells after their "effort" on the stage was over.

After five days solitary "jug" both are free again, and smile at each other from afar off.

Everyone who works has to be at work at eight o'clock. We get up at eleven or twelve in time for lunch. The bell goes at 12.30, when all prisoners, male and female, troop to the kitchen with their bowls and plates. Our German batman brings ours up in two buckets and we make our own tea from a samovar.

At two o'clock the bell rings again and off everyone troops to work and remains there until the bell goes at 5.30

At 7 p.m. the bell goes for "Perverka," as the Roll Call is termed, and then all the prisoners line up in "corridors" and are checked.

The prisoners are divided off into the corridors in which their respective rooms are situated, and each corridor is in charge of the senior prisoner, who is called a "Staristor."

The senior prisoner has the post of Laager Staristor, and has some perquisites attached to his exalted position.

The Librarian is the ex-Adjutant to the Grand Duke Nicholas, and his assistant is Prince Golchakoff. The library is full of magazines containing their photographs when employed in the service of the Tzar, and they spend a lot of their time gazing at their own and other photographs in which they figure, in sorrowful and wistful silence. Why both these men have not been shot passes their comprehension. I mention these two names as the Soviet Authorities know all about them. I am careful not to mention the names of other equally exalted persons and relations to royalty, as I was told their identity in strict confidence. One poor lady appealed to me to get in touch with her husband, a world-famous man, and implore him on no account to return to Russia, even though he should receive a telegram from her requesting him to do so, as she is in terror lest the Reds might try the same dodge on her husband, as was tried with success on another man who had escaped out of Russia.*

* Since being repatriated I have communicated with this lady's husband, a well-known general, and delivered to him his wife's warning.—AUTHOR.

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The Reds sent this man a wire purporting to come from his wife, and imploring him to return to her since he would be quite safe in Russia. The man, thinking the telegram was genuine, returned to Russia, was promptly pounced upon as he crossed the frontier and immediately shot, intimation of the incident being sent to his wife.

One woman in the laager here has told me at the theatre that she has written many letters to the Soviet Authorities for news of her husband. Yesterday she submitted a further application to the Vetcheka and to-day she has received her application back with the information scrawled across it that her husband was shot three months ago. *There is not a single prisoner* in this laager with the exception of the Mission who has not had a near and dear relative murdered. Many are entirely without kith and kin, who have all been shot, and how some of the people in this place have escaped is beyond all understanding.

Some are absolutely certain to be shot sooner or later, and what's more, they know it.

One ex-naval officer who is teaching me Russian knows he will only leave the laager on his way to face a firing squad. His crime is that he is an ex-naval officer.

Another interesting person is a wild-looking girl of seventeen, whose fuzzy dark hair stands out like a huge mop. She is in prison for life as she knows the spot where many thousands of gold roubles have been hidden by her family.

The Reds have shot all her family, consisting of mother, father, two brothers, and a sister, who all resisted the Bolsheviks, and this girl told the Reds they could shoot her as soon as they wished, as she has no intention of revealing the family secret.

The Reds hope to get the secret from her, and so refrain from burying the secret with her by killing her. The girl knows that the Reds would shoot her even if she revealed the secret, so as she hopes to see the outside of the prison if the present people are ousted, she keeps her secret to herself.

We refer to the girl as the Million Dollar Doll. Poor thing, she is already half insane.

There is a dangerous woman here called the Baroness Ostin-Sakana. She is a spy and we know it, and it is her business to find out what the Mission think of things and what they talk about. Heaps of friends have warned us against this good lady, and though she nearly breaks her neck in her endeavours to talk to us, she is singularly unsuccessful. The Laager Authorities do not mind much these old hags talking

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to us ; in fact, they are getting less strict with us over this talking business, and the old Baroness, who is as ugly as sin and must know it, fairly chivvies some of our poor little youths about.

She has not addressed a word to me, but sent a note to the "dear kind English Commandant," which did not meet with a response.

Some nursing sisters have arrived in the "jug." Two are sisters of well-known officers and come from famous Russian families.

One sister has been in England eleven years, and speaks English perfectly. They don't know what they are in prison for. Poor girls, they have no stockings and walk about in slippers made from dried grass, plaited. Luckily it is mid-summer.

The majority of the men use these grass shoes and boots which are manufactured in the laager.

With few exceptions the majority of the prisoners are in rags and those who have any clothes which are anything like decent are in constant fear that they will be taken from them.

Very few of the female prisoners can boast of stockings which are free from holes, and their footwear is enough to make one weep with pity. There are six English Bolsheviks in this laager, and this is the story concerning them, as related to me by "George," as we affectionately call one of them. He answers to the name quite nicely. George and his companions have lived in London for many years—some were born in England, and cannot speak any other language.

These bright specimens belonged to certain Socialistic Clubs, and being under the impression that they were born orators, held forth on the ideals of Bolshevism, so much so, that they decided to leave England "that land of oppression" and embark for Russia, where all men are free in the "paradise upon earth."

On asking the British Authorities for permission to proceed to Russia they were provided with the necessary leave and the wherewithal to do so.

They arrived at and crossed the Russian frontier, and after some "misunderstandings" with the Soviet Authorities, arrived in Moscow.

George and his fellow idealists did not exactly expect to be pulled in open carriages through the cheering crowds of Moscow after being met by a brass band and red carpet at the station, but they were very disagreeably surprised to find that they did not even exist so far as the Authorities in Moscow were concerned.

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Nothing daunted, George & Co., after hunting for fifty-six hours for house accommodation and not feeling inclined to spend any more nights on the station platform, with difficulty groped their way to a Commissar of sorts.

They proceeded to introduce themselves to this Commissar as English Bolsheviks, and asked to be given a room to live in.

The Commissar told them to go to the Housing Committee, and within five minutes of interview starting had them out of the front door into the street.

After another luxurious night spent on the station platform, the party wended their way to the Housing Committee, and after weary hours of trudging from one address to another, found the people they were after.

The Housing Committee, after keeping George and friends a few hours on the doorstep, granted them an interview which lasted three minutes, resulting in the Georges being told to go and find a room, and having found one, to report back to the Committee for a written permission to occupy it.

The weary party trudged off and after going from door to door for two days discovered a room at the top of a house with only three Red soldiers living in it, whereas a room of that particular size should have accommodated at least ten people. The English Bolsheviks having obtained the necessary permission to occupy the room from the Housing Committee, took all their stuff from the station and dumped it in their new abode.

They next visited another Commissar and asked for food. "Work," said the Commissar, "and you will get food tickets." "What work can we do?" asked George. "Go and find work and report back," replied the Commissar.

George informed the Commissar that he and his party did not know how to set about finding work. The Commissar replied that they would soon find out how to when their stomachs rattled.

Our friends left this Commissar and went to another. The other Commissar supported the reply of the previous one, whereupon George in desperation said that if he and his party would not be given food they would have to buy it.

The Commissar sat up, and took notice of the suggestion of buying food. He asked the little party as to where they proposed to purchase food since there was no such thing as any kind of shop open, and secondly, from where would they produce the necessary money to purchase food, supposing it *was* possible to purchase any.

George replied that he and his companions had money which they had brought out from England with them. On hearing

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this cheering news, the Commissar really did take interest in the matter, to the extent of instructing George and his pals at once to deliver up all their documents and money—this was Communistic Russia—protests were unavailing, and the party were uncereemoniously hustled out of the Commissar's abode, destitute.

On returning to their room they found that all their baggage had been thoroughly inspected by their companions, the Red soldiers, who informed them that they had no business to possess three shirts, four pairs of socks, three suits and five handkerchiefs apiece. The Reds went on to explain that they were under the impression that George and party were Socialists and Communists, and yet in the face of such assertions had garments in their possession which obviously belonged to their less fortunate Communist comrades (to wit, themselves), who had only one shirt, sock and handkerchief.

Again protests were useless. This is Communistic Russia ; no one has a right to own anything, there is no such thing as a private house. Every single thing in the house is nationalised. Thoroughly played out, George and Co. went to a High Commissar and related to him their bitter grievances.

The Commissar was most indignant and furious on hearing George's opinion to the effect that he considered Russia under the present conditions hell upon earth. George went on to say that if what his short experience in Moscow represented the aims and results of Communism, the quicker some change was made the better it would be.

The Commissar, beside himself with rage, told George and the other five men that they were all a danger to Bolshevism, and that there was only one safe place for them, and that was the prison.

The whole six were arrested on the spot and have been in this laager from that date to this, a period of two months.

They are very uncertain as to whether they will be shot or not, and George has entreated me to bring the pitiable case of all the six English Bolsheviks to the notice of the British Government when (yes, when) I arrive in England. George has only one ambition in life now, and that is "to stand on a soap box in Hyde Park and tell the British Public what Bolshevism and Communism really do stand for," and he goes on to say that he would rather sweep the streets of London and be able to call his house his castle, and his soul his own, than live a free and honoured man in Bolshevik Russia. I told George that he had been a very naughty man for misleading people in England, as undoubtedly he did by making wild speeches on a subject he

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knew nothing about, and that, if he was now such a rampant anti-Bolshevik and Communist after only two months' treatment, how much more would he be useful to be let loose in England after twelve months' sojourn in Russia.

George tearfully replied that he wished that every Bolshevik Communist or Socialist in England would come to the birth-place of such doctrines for a spell, before letting off gas on a subject they anything but understand. Hear, hear, George ! But you're too late, my boy.

An alarm of fire was given last night just as we were going to bed. We dashed down our corridor and found the bookbinding room on fire.

We burst open the door and got buckets of liquid out of a cesspool and flung it on the blaze.

We extinguished it in twenty minutes and retired back to our room, and were afterwards thanked by the Authorities for our efforts.

One officer had a bucket of liquid from the cesspool flung over him by mistake in the dense smoke. We suggested he sleep elsewhere, but he is sending his clothes to the wash to-morrow, and meanwhile has put them in an airtight receptacle.

Some prisoners were released to-day. Including themselves, we all wonder what "released " means. All we know is that they have left the laager under the care of an armed guard.

Five of us have got permission to occupy one of the rooms vacated by the released party.

We moved into our new room to-day and settled ourselves in. The operation took less than a quarter of an hour. It is much nicer having only five in a room and we are very pleased about it.

In all the rooms of course there are vermin. We go through our underclothes every morning and evening, as it is impossible to keep the lice away, and we only hope that the variety which visit us are not the typhus ones.

At nights when the lights are put out battalions of bed bugs come out from their hiding places in the crevices in the walls and cracks in our plank beds.

On the word "go," we all suddenly light our candles, and before the bugs can beat a retreat we lay out large numbers of them.

We have done all we can in the way of scalding the wooden beds and disinfecting the rooms, but presuming we destroy all the lice and bugs in our rooms, they march into our rooms from the Russians' rooms, and now we are gradually getting used to it, since we have had eight months of their devoted attention.

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I cannot get used to them, and have managed to keep singularly clear of them by at once doing battle every time I am attacked.*

Of course gambling is strictly prohibited, but every afternoon four or five of us play bridge in our room. The Authorities have frequently raided rooms and confiscated all cards found. Our rooms have not been raided, and I am convinced the Commandant knows we play cards. His sentries have seen us at it, but we are too much in favour with the Authorities to have our cards pinched.

There is a French Vice-Consul in jug with us, and he comes up to our room regularly and plays bridge.

A Workmen's Committee came round inspecting the laager to-day.

I interviewed them and asked them to inform me as to the reason for our imprisonment. They were most sympathetic and agreed that there was no reason for it, and said that they would represent our case to the Highest Authority.

I spend most of my time writing to the principal of the Vetcheka, on different matters, and also to Checherin, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, demanding to know why we have been detained in Moscow in face of the repeated promises made to me from time to time by the highest in the land that we should be sent straight to England. I can get no replies to my letters, though the Commandant swears that he sends them on. I believe him.

It is extraordinary that I can get replies on all subjects except the reason for our confinement, and without exception my requests are complied with.

It is useless for me to write down the daily rumours ; they are all so contradictory and numerous.

There is an ex-Governor of a province in the next room to ours. He speaks very good English, and every morning he comes into our room with the Soviet newspaper called the *Pravda*, and translates it to me.

He is an extremely far-seeing and well-balanced man, and we try to put two and two together, and try and work out what is happening in the outside world. The ex-Governor is surprised he was not shot long ago.

* Extract from Lord Emmott's Interim Report :—

" With regard to parasites Mr. Cooke said that ' verminous ' was not a strong enough word to describe the conditions of the prison . . . the lice were there by the million. There was no means of keeping them down. As to the bugs, I killed 60 or 70 of them the first night of my stay there on the wall alone."

" Mr. Frank tells us that one afternoon he found on his singlet seventy-six lice, and that that was repeated day after day."

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The principal method of "doing in" people in the prison in Moscow is for the Chief Gaoler to go to the door of the prisoner's cell and call out a name.

The prisoner answers to his name, and is told to "come along." On leaving the cell the prisoner is conducted along a corridor and then is ordered to go down some steps.

When the unfortunate person is half-way down, the Commissar who is following him shoots the prisoner in the back of the head, and at once returns for his next victim, whilst the corpse of the preceding one is removed by the sentries. The number of persons who have been executed in this way is positively staggering, and I have got my facts from eye-witnesses (other prisoners) and from the Reds themselves, and there is no one who has been in prison who will deny the above-stated facts.*

Derzenski,† the Commissar of death, has personally shot hundreds of persons with his own hands in this way. Night after night this fiend spends his time in this bloody way.

Another way of getting rid of persons who are not wanted on earth by the Reds, is to call round to the prison or laagers at two o'clock in the morning in a motor car.

The Red executioners leave the car at the gates and proceed to the room in which the condemned man, all unconscious of his impending fate, is peacefully sleeping, or otherwise, surrounded by his comrades.

He is roughly awakened and told to come along. In terror the unfortunate man (or woman) starts up and immediately commences to dress, when he is roughly ordered to come along "bez baggage"—without clothes or belongings.

He hurriedly bequeathes his different belongings to his

* Extract from Lord Emmott's Interim Report :—

"Mr. Grundy told us that when the time came for shootings, it was his duty to awaken the prisoners and take them to the cell door where they were shot.

"He gave the following description of what occurred :—

"'At the latter end there was a young lad of 19 who did the shooting. They would call out "Grundy!" "Yes." "Have you so-and-so here?" "Yes." "Well, he is to be questioned; bring him here." So I used to take him out of my cell upstairs into the other door, lead him down the cellar steps where they shot the people, and before the door was closed the young lad of 19 years of age pulled the man in. He said: "Come on" and got hold of him with the left hand, pulled him on, and put a bullet right at the back of his neck, and he immediately dropped on the floor.

"'Eight days before I was let out I took sixteen men to be shot in one night, from 12.30 to 3.0 o'clock in the morning.'

† This is the gentleman whom Mrs. Sherridan parted from with tears in her eyes—so she has written.—AUTHOR.

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particular pals, unless he is in a state of collapse by this time, and walks out of the room to the sorrowful good-byes of his friends and companions.

After the condemned man has left the room prayers are offered up for his soul.

Persons have left our laager "bez baggage," with painful frequency, and have not returned for their stuff. I wonder if anyone in England will doubt our stories? Let such people come to me, and I will *prove* them to be true, and will also give such persons a few details and incidents on such subjects with proof as will nearly make them sick, safe from dangers as they are in England.

I am not going to record or write about the miseries surrounding us. Too much has been written already I expect on such subjects, but what with the want of all necessities of life, food, etc., and no news from our Government, not a suggestion as to when we will eventually be released, we marvel at our own cheerfulness, as most of the day we are as merry as can be.

Sometimes a squabbling fit and depression descends on some of the party or on the whole lot of us, but it is only a question of minutes before we are laughing and ragging again. Good old Mission, we must keep our peckers up.

Teddy keeps very fit and well. Everyone is very fond of Teddy and as he gets scraps of food from everyone he has not lost much flesh.

On two previous occasions small dogs found their way into the laager and disappeared. A small dark man with a black beard and thick black-rimmed spectacles, is accused by all of having eaten the two dogs.

We have "talked at" this man, and one glance from him at our respective faces has I think insured Teddy from being turned into a stew.

We get quite a lot of horse flesh served up in the soup and stew. We are all more or less off horse meat after seeing what we have, but still one has to live and the sight of meat of any kind has irresistible attractions for us.

Before we were captured a Russian girl bought some material and made a perfectly correct Union Jack, which she presented to me. Attempts have been made to take the flag from us, but we hid it in all kinds of places.

The Assistant Commandant came up to our room one day for the flag which I keep nailed to the wall.

I immediately hid it.

He sent up a message for me to take the flag to him. I undid all the stitches and made a complete rag of the flag and remained

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where I was. After a few days the flag was again wanted by the Assistant Commandant and he was informed through an interpreter who accompanied me that he could not have it.

I have now stitched the flag together and we are all very pleased that I was not compelled to burn it, as I would have done if the A.C. had insisted on having it.

Our Mission Stamp, with which I stamped all documents, has been confiscated by the Vetcheka.

I have written demanding an explanation for the confiscation and in reply was given a receipt for it and was informed that the stamp would be given back *when* we leave Moscow.

We are all surprised that the stamp was not taken away from us long ago, as I, on one occasion, issued passes to all members of the Mission allowing them to walk freely unmolested about the town of Omsk after the Reds, represented by our dear pal Podlonoffsky, had refused us such passports. As "Poddy" refused to sign passes, I did it for him, and put the Mission Stamp on them.

None of the bush apes can read, and so long as a document has a stamp or seal on it, it is all that is necessary.

On one occasion to prove what mugs the bush apes and the Red officials are, we stuck a Red seal which we took off a cigarette tin on to a document, to which the Reds very nearly raised their hats. Some more Workmen's Committees have visited the laager and I interviewed them all. The women members of the Committee swore to help us. Go it, the women! You ought to wear the breeches, and we'll buy them for you if you'll get us out of this hole.

Every Sunday the relatives of prisoners are allowed inside the laager from 2 p.m. until 4 p.m. The prisoners prepare to receive their visitors by bringing the little tables and wooden chairs from their respective rooms into the garden.

It is a great and yet very sad sight when the prison gates are open to see mothers, sisters, wives and children rush into the arms of their husbands, fathers, brothers, etc.

They entwine their arms round each other as if they never wish to let go again.

The visitors always bring foodstuffs and tobacco for their relatives, and it is really this extra foodstuff which keeps the prisoners alive.

The Mission have no friends or relatives in Moscow, so we sit on the steps of the Church and the Commandant's office and watch the scene.

Two of the children have made great friends with us, and the

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visitors look at us with pitying looks ; it is the one kind look we don't appreciate, however kindly meant.

On one of the Sundays I was told by a woman prisoner, that a lady wished to speak to me. I pulled myself together and followed her to where a pretty girl was sitting. She rose and we shook hands, and speaking in perfect English said she wished to thank me, etc., etc., for evacuating her mother and sister from Kurgan. Her mother and sister were my old friends Mrs. and Miss E., who apparently wrote to the sister in Moscow on hearing that British officers were in prison in the Ivanoffsky laager, and she got permission to come in on Sunday to see an aunt (having adopted one of the women prisoners for the occasion) and then asked if there was an officer of my name in the jug. *Voilà*, that's how it's done !

She presented me with a beer bottle full of milk which we all had in our coffee after the visitors had left, and my word, it was good.

The girl said she would come again next Sunday if it was possible for her to do so, but up to now she has not reappeared. The Aunt stunt is a very dangerous one, and I asked her not to repeat it, but boldly to ask for me next time.

My naval officer instructor has suddenly been taken from the laager. I hope to God the unfortunate boy (he is only twenty, and as handsome as any fresh-coloured blue-eyed sailor could possibly be) has not been shot. A more charming chap I never met. There is a new arrival to-day in shape of Count T. who is a Hungarian officer and son of the famous General in Constantinople. T. is very glad to see our two Hungarians, who both knew Count T. and his illustrious family in Hungary.

Also there arrived six ex-Ministers of State all dressed in morning coats or swallow tails.

As these gentlemen are somewhat elderly they have been handed brooms and have started their new, if somewhat less lucrative, employments by brushing up the leaves and picking up the cigarette butts which other prisoners throw down.

These six are in "quod" for "counter-revolutionary" work, and, rumour has it, will be "done in" in due course.

As I wanted to tell the others that a "Cabinet Minister picked up my cigarette end," I threw one down in an absent kind of way whilst reading, and it was duly picked up by one of the ex-bulwarks of the Russian Empire.

Poor old men ! But it is such men as these who must hold themselves both directly, in some ways, and indirectly responsible for the present state of affairs and their own pitiable plight.

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Visitors bring in all kinds of rumours, and the French Consul hears daily from "reliable sources" that we are all going home in a few days. This sort of stuff is very cheering, but since it has gone on for so long, we have got to the stage of the wolf, wolf having no effect.

Cheers! My naval officer returned this morning. The Vetcheka only wanted to ask him some questions.

One of the prisoners died this morning, and he was lying in his home-made coffin outside the Church steps whilst the old white-haired priest said Mass.

Two candles burnt at the head of the corpse and one at his feet.

There being no lid to a Russian coffin the dead man was on full view to all.

We number priests among the prisoners and these ancient people wander about in their long robes and sandals looking very much like Biblical pictures, as they all grow long beards and their hair in ringlets hangs over their shoulders.

Some time ago the French Consul sent all our names to a French organisation who are free in Moscow. This organisation consisting of Madame Charpentier and her two daughters, are feeding the French Consul, some Rumanians, some prisoners, British subjects, and others who are confined and are also free in different parts of Moscow.

I wrote out a request to the French organisation to help us as we were in a bad way, and about ten days later a supply of three pounds of bread per man, some potatoes, eggs, sugar, to last for three days were brought into the laager by Miss Charpentier. Oh, I cannot describe our joy in receiving these things, and if ever a woman looked like a ministering angel, Miss Charpentier did when she entered the gates of the prison with foodstuff for us.

Twice a week the Charpentiers have visited this laager and brought food in the way of bread, apples, eggs, tomatoes, and cooking oil—the commodities differing slightly each time, the staple food being bread and some pounds of meat. That fresh meat! We could have died from happiness at smelling it when cooked, and when it came to eating it, I, for one, could have buried my face in the dish of stew and inhaled it.

Teddy was not forgotten by any means, and his delight at receiving some bones was only equal to ours. His little sides fairly bulged, and I am sure his skin had not received such a stretching for a long, long time.

God bless the Charpentiers! The stuff they bring us, has without exaggeration, saved our lives. Even with the additional

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food we are very hungry ! What would have happened with only prison food to exist upon is told in three words—death from starvation.*

When on occasions for forty-eight hours the laager Authorities were unable to issue food to the prisoners, I told the Commandant that if he could not feed us he should at least give us a chance and let us free to scavenge in the town for food, and went on to say that if the Soviet Government could not feed their prisoners they had no right to keep them in prisons, and according to International and other law, the Soviet Government must release such prisoners.

The Commandant replied that he absolutely agreed with everything I said, but that the Soviet Government recognised no laws, though he would write to the Authorities and tell them that unless sufficient food was sent to the laager at once, he wished to be relieved of his post, and meanwhile, he would issue orders for all work in the laager to cease until food was supplied.

The Commandant also allowed the corridor stoves to be used to cook on.

Whilst I was sitting on the Church steps in the sun, a man came to me and said that a British officer had just been brought into the laager as a prisoner.

I waited outside the Commandant's office for the new arrival and presently out came Captain Neville, R.F.A., who was one of the members of Colonel Johnson's party. Neville was ill in hospital in Tomsk when Colonel Johnson was sent from there to Moscow, and on to England, so Neville got left behind.

After recovering from typhus, Neville contracted other diseases and after months of illness, has been sent to Moscow, and is now convalescent.

We got full details from Neville as to what happened to Colonel Johnson's party from the time they were taken prisoners, and apparently they had a very thin time indeed.

The newspapers are full of the Red Revolution in England, India, and other parts of the British Empire. One day we read this kind of stuff and the next day the papers say that

* Extract from report submitted to the Secretary of State for War :—

" Madame and Mademoiselle Charpentier, who, almost up to the time of our release, at great personal risk, brought food to the Mission while confined in laagers in Moscow. Not only did these two ladies look after the British prisoners in the laagers and prisons, but also fed a very large number of British subjects, men, women, and children living in Moscow. The highest praise is due to these two ladies and I wish, on behalf of the Mission, that the grateful thanks of the Mission be officially conveyed to Madame and Mademoiselle Charpentier."

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England has recognised Soviet Russia and an agreement has been signed for the exchange of all prisoners.

We heard some time ago that numerous British Labour Delegates had arrived in Moscow and other parts of Russia. I have addressed letters to these delegates, but have not been favoured with a reply or a visit.

A lot of spying goes on in this laager, and the place is full of spies. Prisoners are continually being denounced by their fellow prisoners.

To-day all the laager was thoroughly searched by armed soldiers from the Vetcheka, for certain documents relating to the manufacture of a departmental stamp. Our rooms were left alone and we were not questioned, but the other prisoners, men and women, were taken away a few at a time and their rooms searched. Everyone was very scared and white round the gills. Only one arrest was made and the prisoner has been taken to the Vetcheka.

A dreadful row took place in our corridors last evening. It appears that the ex-Mayor of Petrograd was asleep and was awakened by some other famous lads chattering outside his door. He got out of bed and the row started. A crowd soon collected and we stopped playing bridge to see what the trouble was about.

The ex-Mayor was using absolute Russian Billingsgate, and his long beard was working up and down at a fine old lick.

There were several sentries round and the little bush apes were laughing fit to crack their sides at the entertainment supplied by the ex-Mayor. Prince Golchakoff was in the party, and was thoroughly enjoying himself baiting the ex-Mayor. The Prince is a huge man of about fifty-five or sixty years of age, and full of fun. The object of the Mayor's wrath was a small Jew who smiled and said nothing in reply to the storm of abuse which fell on his head. It was a most distinguished group, and, sad to relate, all were enjoying the fun with the exception of the Mayor, who after foaming at the mouth for another five minutes retired into his room and slammed the door. The bush apes held each other up quite exhausted with laughing whilst the rest of us smilingly retired to our rooms, and we had some of the Mayor's "choicest bits" translated to us later on, and very good they were too.

A Workmen's Committee again visited the laager and demanded to know why the British Mission did no work and ordered the Commandant to set us all to work at once.

The Work Master came to me and said we must work, and he would give us nominal jobs which would not in anyway

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assist the Soviet Government. As this kind of "rough stuff" has been handed to us repeatedly, I told the Work Master that I took no orders from him.

The Work Master then went to the Commandant and I went to tell the other fellows that a storm was in the offing.

Next morning the Commandant sent for me, and informed me that the Vetcheka had ordered him to put the Mission to work at once, and requested me to issue orders for everyone to work.

I informed the Commandant that the question of the Mission working had repeatedly been thrashed out from the time the 5th Army Staff in Krasnoyarsk had us up before them till now, and the answer was the same—we had not the right to work, and would not work.

The Commandant then asked me whether we would not work because we had not the right to or because we simply would not.

I told him that under no circumstances would we work for the Soviet Government in any way whatsoever.

The Commandant replied that he would convey my answer to the Vetcheka, but that there were ways and means of making people work and that we should find ourselves in the solitary cells of the prison.

I closed the interview by telling him I had nothing more to add to what I had already said.

I then went back and told the Mission, who were anxiously waiting to hear the result of the interview, what had happened, and we made up our minds that the French food supply would be cut off and we should be confined in the prison, and the outlook was a very gloomy one for us.

The Laager Authorities tried to induce us to take up footling jobs and so enable them to tell the Vetcheka that we were working—but we would not even pretend to work and did not fall into the trap so slyly set.*

July 31st.—No reply from the Vetcheka. We wonder when we are to be cleared out of this laager. Rumour has it that all

* Extract from an article appearing in *Blackwood's Magazine*, No. mcclxxiv, for December 1921, entitled "An Englishwoman's Experiences in Bolshevik Prisons," by L. Bowler:—

"Eventually I was taken from Butirka to Ivanoffsky Camp. There everyone was obliged to rise at 7 a.m. and work for eight hours daily in different workshops, such as bookbinding, printing, making clothes for the Red Army, or sawing wood. I was determined I should not do any compulsory work, especially as I had heard that a party of English officers, who had been there before me, had staunchly refused to take part in any work whatsoever."

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foreigners (non-Russians) are to be concentrated in one laager, and that we are all going home, bow-wow. Everyone in the laager knows for certain that the Mission is leaving them, they have all been told so from such reliable sources. We are much flattered by the grief exhibited at our impending departure, which is expressed by everyone. We were frequently told that the English are always so cheerful and merry ; if these good people could sometimes cheer up themselves they would feel the better for it.

September 2nd.—Orders were received from the Commandant that the Mission would leave this laager in an hour, and march to another one.

What ho ! as they say in Greek ! So we are for it. More anon ; I must carefully conceal these papers.

CHAPTER XI

THE ANDRONOFFSKY PRISON

Andronoffsky Laager Prison Camp, September 3rd.—Here we are, here we are, here we are again ! The Mission intact.

When told to get ready in an hour to move from the Ivanoffsky Prison the Commandant was told that the feat was impossible, and moreover two carts must be provided for our kit.

The Commandant said we must carry our kit—answer impossible—and we would not budge until two carts were produced.

When the carts arrived we commenced packing and in half an hour were ready to move out.

We formed up again into fours, surrounded by the terrible Vetcheka bush apes and with the whole laager turned out to wring our hands a sincere farewell, we march off. Right sorry we were to part for ever from some very good friends we had made during our six weeks' imprisonment in the Ivanoffsky Laager.

After marching for about twenty minutes, we arrived at the Andronoffsky Prison Camp, and marched in followed by our two carts, and formed up two deep for roll call and inspection.

On our arrival, the "inmates" crowded round us, and we were delighted to meet the French Military Mission who are prisoners in this laager.

After registering, we were all put into one room which had been hastily vacated on our arrival. The room was filthy, so we took all the wooden beds out into the yard and got buckets of scalding water and poured it over the woodwork.

Hundreds of bed bugs died that afternoon. A whole nest was in my bed and were as thick as a hive under the planks.

We next thoroughly scrubbed the floor and walls of our rooms, and then settled ourselves in.

It had been a practice of the Reds to make no distinction between officers and other ranks, and the Reds were continually astonished to find that our N.C.O.'s and privates had no desire to break away from the "oppression" of their officers, and were annoyed to see our men saluting us on all occasions, even in prison, as saluting in the Red Army is prohibited.

During the whole time of our captivity, though we've all

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been herded together, discipline has been maintained and it gives the Reds something to think about. A fine old soldier is R.S.M. Walters, R.E. He is well over fifty-five, and carries himself like a ramrod, and works for us like a Trojan because he says he must work, or he will die. We are more sorry to see poor old Walters walking round and round the square for exercise, than for the rest of us put together. The Reds gave the N.C.O.'s and men pamphlets telling them to shoot their officers and join the Bolsheviks.

Our youngest private soldier is Smith, of the Canadians, who is twenty-one, and the youngest officer is Lieut. Eyford, aged nineteen, also of the Canadians. With the exception of three who are under thirty-three, all of the members of the Mission are between the ages of twenty-three and twenty-eight, leaving out, of course, R.S.M. Walters. So we are, as everyone says, a young party; but some of the heads are old on young shoulders, as for instance, our "professional prisoner of war," who has already tasted four years as a prisoner of war in Germany, and made nineteen attempts to escape from the numerous prisons in Hunland, in which he was confined. Our "Georgik" too is a very stout lad, and I am indeed thankful and lucky to have these two, and the Adjutant, Captain Prickett to pow-wow with when knotty problems present themselves, and the soundness of the decisions arrived at is proved by results.

We have installed ourselves as comfortably as possible in the room and have fixed up a stove in the centre, on which Smith does all the cooking assisted by Hummel, the German soldier. As the work in the cooking and washing line is heavy, we have engaged two other prisoners, as batmen and assistant cooks, and it is their job to fetch the water, and scrub out the room twice a week, and do other odd jobs about the room.

Everyone does his own private work and there is no personal waiting-on done in this establishment. The Commandant is only a temporary one and is exceedingly well disposed towards us, as he was here when some thirty other British prisoners of war were confined in this laager some three or four months ago.

On our wall is painted a naval signal done in flags showing that the party have left.

The Assistant Commandant is an excellent fellow and is as much a Red or Communist as I am. The French Mission are very glad to see us and, of course, a great friendship in the shape of an *Entente Cordiale* has sprung up between the two Missions.

The son and brother of Madame and Miss Charpentier is in the laager. He is a French officer who was caught Archangel way.

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This laager is another monastery and our building stands in the middle of the oldest cemetery in Moscow.

It is extraordinary to be surrounded by graves and vaults. Some of the monuments and grave-stones are very beautiful, and a great many of the celebrities of Russia are buried in this cemetery.

We spend most of our time wandering amongst the graves, and we respectfully go down into the vaults and crypts. All the coffins being lidless the contents are exposed. I have noticed that some of the skeletons have been disturbed. The Commandant only allows the French and English to wander where they like in the graveyard, as this laagar is full of criminals who have robbed the dead. The Russians bury their dead, in the majority of cases, with their jewellery still on the corpse. We notice that all the skeletons are stripped of their jewellery and it is absolutely obvious that the robbery has taken place since Bolshevik occupation, as all the doors leading to the vaults were securely padlocked previous to Red occupation, and no one was ever allowed to go down into the vaults, which were only opened to admit another coffin.

The doors of the crypts and vaults are now all broken, and as hands, fingers and heads of the skeletons have been moved, it is fairly obvious that rings, bracelets and necklaces have been removed.

Every day the earth from graves, and railings round beautiful monuments are being removed by the Authorities, and horses stray about the graveyard. The whole place now resembles a wilderness, and priceless carvings and statuary are being ruined.

Many of the vaults have small shrines built over them, in which relatives come and pray for their dead, and gifts such as eggs, cigarettes, wine, are still to be seen behind glass panels which have been left intact.

One of Peter the Great's wives is buried under the main Church. The Churches contain beautiful and rich ornaments and lovely paintings. These articles have all been removed into one room, which has been boarded up.

There are many foreigners in the laagar and we are beginning to think that after all there may be some truth in the rumour that this is a concentration camp for all non-Russian prisoners.

There is a small theatre in this prison also, and the word was passed along from the other laagar that the Mission contained theatrical talent, with the result that Rooney's play was again in demand. The thing passed off most successfully, and we had to put it on again the next night. Exhibition dancing was given by Captain Horrocks, who is A1 at stage and ordinary

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dancing, but he has to be fairly dragged out from underneath the proverbial bushel.

A meeting of all the prisoners was called the other night to elect a President for the Amateur Dramatic Society, a Captain of Games and Sports, and President of Education.

Rooney was unanimously elected by the prisoners and seconded by the Authorities as President of the A.D.S., a great feather in our cap as some of the actors and actresses in the laagar are well-known professionals, but recognised that Rooney was a star actor-manager.

I was elected Captain of Games and a French officer was made President of Education. The Mission are soon to the fore.

We have a football, and we kick it about, and when it goes over the wall some of us accompanied by bush apes, have a fine old hunt for it in the jungle outside the prison. Escape would be easy from the prison bush apes, but beyond that very difficult, and again impossible for any of us as it means vengeance falling on the heads of the remainder should one or two succeed in escaping.

A "quoit" tennis court has been rigged up and strenuous matches take place. A "bull-board" is a great favourite game, especially with bush apes, as they cheat and fool each other and are thus entirely within their element. I have started my letter writing campaign to different Authorities, and the Commandant's office is flooded with these *billet doux*. We hear that Mr. H. G. Wells, Mrs. Sherridan, and some Labour Delegates are in Moscow. It is a pity that these dope hunters don't insist on seeing us. We can put them on the right track for dope if they would drop in for a cup of tea with us, but no, such people, I expect, go back to England and write screeds of stuff "straight from the horse's mouth because I've been to Moscow" for the benefit (?) of the British Public. We know that these authors and people who "sculpt" Lenin are accompanied at all times by a friendly Commissar.

None of these good people speak Russian and yet they "interview" all the peasants and workmen, visit factories, etc., etc., and then write an article dictated by their interpreter in presence of a Commissar. What a farce! Think it all over—it is a leg pull; a scream—and yet the rot which we all feel convinced is being written, is written in all seriousness and digested by a level-headed public, just as seriously. Come and see us, H. G. W. We'll talk to you in English in presence of all the English-speaking Commissars in Russia, but perhaps, it would not do for you to express a desire to see your fellow countrymen! It might cramp your style in dope collecting.

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We have some American reporters and American Communists in jug with us now. They arrived the other day. It is laughable. These poor souls visited Russia with open hearts full of sympathy for the workmen and peasants of Russia.

They have seen nothing at all of the workmen and peasants, but received such a series of eye-openers of what Bolshevism and Communism has done for Russia that they foolishly expressed their unfavourable impressions to the Reds. They were promptly jugged and now we have a transformation scene. The pro-Bolsheviks are now rampart anti-Bolsheviks ; so much so that the good wife of one American fetched her umbrella hard down on the head of the nice Assistant Commandant of the laager, when she was being conducted in. The A. C. took it in good part, being anti-Red himself, and now the poor lady and her husband are wondering whatever possessed them to imagine that Bolshevism was the ideal state for this world, and also to lecture the American people in favour of Bolshevism.* All persons who have tendencies to embrace Bolshevism and Communism, or even overstep themselves in their enthusiasm over Socialism are strongly recommended to take a trip to Russia and I would respectfully recommend the British Government to pay the passages of such people out to Russia, as it would be money spent in the greatest interest of the British Empire.

Lack-a-day, feathery me, odd bodikins, and fish ! Some of our old pals from the Ivanoffsky laager have turned up in this laager, including Count T. and an old lady who adores the Mission and is a celebrated actress, and one or two Roumanians, etc., etc. Well, well, well ! The world is small, etc., and we are very glad to see each other, and the result is that rumours have been exchanged and we are all going home. Splendid, *so we're all going home*—how nice to mouth these words—but we might as well spit them out, because we're not.

The newspapers say that the French Government have arranged with the Soviet Government for the exchange of prisoners. The French here are delighted and we hope it is true. When will our Government get us out. Have we a Government ? Yes, rather, and though we've been in the dark for thirteen months, we don't for a second think we're forgotten, though we are afraid the Labour people are keeping

* Extract from "An Englishwoman's Experiences in Bolshevik Prisons" :—

"Poor Mrs. Schwartz was only one of the many thousands of Bolshevik victims ; but, unlike others, she and her husband had advocated the cause of Bolsheviks before coming to Russia. They had believed them to be the exponents of justice to the workers, but they soon realised what a terrible misconception they had had of the Soviet Government."

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us here by embarrassing the British Government. Come to Russia, all ye who want to down the capitalist, the employer and the "bourgeoisie." See for yourselves what the result of doing away with capitalists, with banks, bourgeoisie, land-owners, etc., has been for Russia. If you are genuinely satisfied with the result, then stay in this hell and don't try and make old England one. Who is it that instructs and propounds to our large-hearted British workmen the meaning of and ideals of Bolshevism, Socialism and Communism? Some foreign Jew or lunatic, both of whom should be sent back to the slums of Palestine or confined in an asylum according to their category. Ever heard of the Jewish peril? A very real one, methinks! However, enough of lectures—this is a diary and not notes for a lecture, much as I'd like to let off steam generated by a substitution for coal derived from first-hand dope in the land of all that is nasty.

The same old bartering with foodstuff goes on in this laagar. We are worried all day long by hungry prisoners coming to us for bread in exchange for cigarettes. Whenever we've had a crust to spare we have gladly given it to some starving devil. It is heart-breaking to turn them away; they are hungrier than we are, as we avoid a lot of the pangs of hunger by staying in bed as much as possible.

There were orders issued for everyone to work. The permanent Commandant returned and at once got a hustle on.

He is an ex-waiter from a hotel and fancies his chance as an orator. He likes the British, he informed us, and was great friends with the previous British party.

The ex-waiter is very anxious for us to work, and as he does not like to tackle us on the subject he sent his assistant and sentries to tell us to do so. We sent our kind regards back and said that the Mission are tired and sleepy, and nearly injured ourselves laughing at our own jokes on this question.

A notice has now been issued that all prisoners must be up and at work when the bell rings at 8 a.m. and knock off for the midday meal from 1 to 2 p.m. and work from then to 5 p.m. Anyone found not at work during the specified hours will be severely punished by solitary confinement.

The French Commandant asked me if I would go over to their quarters and discuss this order, which had been posted on all our doors. The meeting lasted five minutes, as there was nothing to discuss so far as we were concerned, but the French only wanted to know what the attitude of the British Mission was.

The bell duly rang at 8 a.m. next morning, and the Mission

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turned over and resumed their sleep. At 11 a.m. a sentry came up and told us to dress and get to work. We told him to run away and play. Next, up came the Assistant Commandant and said that the Commandant ordered us all to parade in front of his office.

We had heard of such parades before ; prisoners are paraded and then stopped from returning to their rooms and made to work.

Smelling one of these " Work Parades " in the Commandant's orders, we remained in bed, explaining to the Assistant Commandant that we would not work, and had been sent from the Ivanoffsky laagar to this one, owing to our refusal to work.

Nothing happened though we certainly thought our food from the French Organisation would be cut off, and no wood for our fire would be given to heat our rooms.

A few days after this, the Commandant himself came quietly into our room at 11 a.m. The sun was streaming into the room, and we were all comfortable in bed.

" Well, Englishmen," he said, " look at the sun." " Good morning," we said. " Yes, isn't the sun lovely." That was all ; the Commandant withdrew and we knew our fight with him over the question of work was finished.

This Commandant is a red hot Bolshevik, and has the ideas of a fanatic, and will only allow plays to be written or played in the theatre which are of a serious nature, and have deep and beautiful morals. No dancing, comic songs, or light operas must be put on, so the theatre is a washout at present.

The weather is turning very cold and snow has fallen. God help us if we have to spend the awful winter in this place—as sure as night follows day, some of us will be carried down into the vaults.

Typhus is spreading as it always does in the winter, and what with lack of food, and no clothes, and half-starved, we cannot resist the attacks from the numerous diseases. However, hope is a great thing, and we're full of it.

The prisoners parade once a fortnight for a bath in the town. As these baths are death traps, in so much as in the heated rooms the lice come from the inside of the clothing to the outside, and from thence get on to other persons, we have told the Commandant that the Mission will bath in the laundry as we did in the other laager. After some explanation and pleasant discussion, our proposal was agreed to, and we wangle a very nice clean bath by sitting in the washing tubs and manipulating the hot water over us.

There are many Poles and Letts in this place, and also other

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nationalities. These prisoners are trying our tactics, and say they will not work, as they have not the right to, not being Russians. They haven't got beyond talking, and work away. Snow has fallen again and we have taken to wearing our sheep-skin overcoats when out of doors. We never thought, when we discarded them last spring, that we should ever need them again.

This Commandant is going, and a farewell memorial has been beautifully written in glowing terms, saying what a splendid fellow the Commandant is, and how sorry the whole laager is that he is going.

The Head Staristor brought this memorial to our room for our signatures. We told him that though we had no grouse against the Commandant personally, we regretted we could not associate ourselves with any farewell or other addresses to him.

The French did likewise—but the rest, like the dear toadies they are, did the Commandant proud. They were very sick about it later in the day when the Commandant made his farewell speech from the steps of his office.

He called the British people filthy names, and the French Government brigands and thieves, and cursed the Whites and everyone else who were not Reds. We did not attend the meeting, but heard him stuttering and repeating himself in a series of bellows, and promptly withdrew out of earshot. The Commandant ended by saying he did not blame the British and French people who were in the laager, and we were only puppets and tools in the hands of our savage and cruel Governments who exploited us, etc., etc., and having changed the needle, 'tis said he put on an entirely different record. We hear that the new Commandant is a "good chap." We hope so—but we shall have to tame him and get him hand fed, and I shall also have to start my little writing campaign with him.

The sentries are quite tame and come up to our room in the evenings. They rest their rifles against one of the beds; we take them and examine them, and are amused to hear the little bush apes' opinions of the Reds. None of these boys—every jack one of them are ignorant peasant lads—are Bolsheviks, and knowing that their opinions with us are safe, frankly tell us the day is coming when the Whites will be top dog again, and ridicule the Reds for all they are worth.

Frequently at night and in the evenings rifle shots are heard round the laager and in the town. It was the same at the Ivanoffsky laager. We asked a bush ape, who is an exception to the usual run of them inasmuch as he is very intelligent, what the meaning of these shots is.

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He stated that the New Army soldiers sometimes get interested in their rifles, and examine them and they go off. No one takes any interest in the shots—they go off, and there the matter ends.

The soldiers and sentries we see are in rags and have grass-plaited shoes, and it's the only footwear they've got, and regiments have been sent to the front clothed in rags and without any other footwear than these grass shoes. This is not hearsay, we have seen regiments thus turned out passing the laagers on their way to the front. Mutiny is getting frequent, and there is not the slightest shadow of doubt but that a "turn over" will take place if the present Government do not alter their ways and methods.

The new Commandant has arrived. A truly lovely bird. He is a military fellow and believes in top boots and spurs, whereas our previous Commandants have always worn civilian clothes, after the manner of their respective trades, prior to becoming Commandants.

Lovely bird, also always wears his revolver tucked into his belt and fastened to it by a beautiful scarlet cord attached to the butt of the revolver. He is a clean shaven, tall Jew, with a good threepence in the shilling of German in him. He informed me that he was a prisoner of war in Germany, and met many British officers there. He is quite favourably disposed towards us, but is eaten up with "side," which is rather tiresome, as it will be all the harder to fetch him off his perch.

Since snow has fallen, the present theatre is too cold for the audience, so the Commandant has agreed to allow us to build a theatre in a barn at the further end of the cemetery. We must have a theatre where we can dance, and have our concerts to wile away the time, so we told the Commandant to leave it to us, and said that if he puts a gang at our disposal, our engineers would direct operations.*

The other prisoners are very pleased at the idea of a theatre

* Extract from "An Englishwoman's Experiences in Bolshevik Prisons," by L. Bowler :—

"I became a danseuse for the camp theatre. The latter had been built by sixteen English officers of the Siberian Railway Mission, who were very gay and enterprising, and found time hang heavily on their hands, as they refused to take part in the compulsory work. They made a fairly decent theatre out of a dirty stable. These officers, especially one, a Mr. Rooney, have made their names famous in Ivanoffsky and Andronievsky camps, because the theatres in both places made great progress during their confinement. People admired them very much, and the guards stood in awe of them."

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being built, as it will make all the difference in the world to them.

We started by pulling down a wall, and taking up the whole of the flooring of the barn. Next we sloped the floor and put up tiers of seats. The stage and woodwork for the scenes are a masterpiece, and a lot of draughty places have been boarded up. All wooden buildings in this country must be double walled to keep out the intense cold.

We carted the piano over to the new theatre, and are now practising new dances, and generally ragging about. We will not agree to any "Red decorations" or photographs of Lenin, Trotsky and Carl Marx being stuffed in the theatre, and we are sick of the pictures of these fellows, and we will not agree to have anything to do with any plays or performance of any kind which introduces propaganda or have anything political in them. When the "International" is sung, as it has been once or twice in the Ivanoffsky laager, we have trooped out, yet the prisoners, men and women, though they hate the "International," have sung it with gusto to please the Authorities.

The Commandant says that Moscow is a very beautiful city, and that the previous British prisoners were shown round the city and visited the theatres. I wrote off to the Authorities and said I had always heard that Moscow was a very ancient and interesting city and that whilst the Mission were staying in Moscow we would all very much like to seize the opportunity of seeing the place. I have up to now received no response to these letters. I have also written letters to Checherin and to the Vetcheka, asking them to grant me an interview, or send some representative to see me, as I had some important points in connection with our stay in Russia which I would like to clear up, in order to be in a position to give our Authorities required information on these points. No replies. The Commandant says he will arrange personally to deliver a letter at the Foreign Office, if I write another one out.

There is definite news that the French are leaving for home. Wild excitement. The French Organisation are leaving and Mademoiselle Charpentier told me that she was handing over the work of feeding us to a Mrs. Harrison, who is an American lady. Glad and delighted as we are that the French are going for their own sakes, we are very sorry to lose them and bitterly wonder when our turn will come to go also.

A bath parade again this morning. All the men and women herded into column of route, trooped off into the town.

After they had gone I visited the Commandant and asked him

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for permission to bath in the laundry. Same old question, as to why we had not gone with the others, and the same stereotyped replies from me. In the end he said we could use the laundry in the evening.

In the evening I wrote a "chit" and sent an interpreter off to the Commandant requesting him to be so kind as to let me have the key of his private bathroom.

The Commandant, has, I am told, a nice clean English bath, and we thought we would like to bathe in a real English bath again. Of course, everyone including myself thought the chit would not bear fruit, but in about ten minutes, back came a polite chit from the Commandant enclosing his bathroom key and asking that it should be returned when done with.

We all took it in turns to have the best bath we had had for months and months; and we have repeated the bathing in the Commandant's bath stunt to the amusement and wonderment of the others.

A sight for the gods blew into the laagar this afternoon. Some fifteen weird looking men from the East in long flowing and gorgeous robes and enormous black sheép and goatskin busbies, quite double the size of a guardsman's busby, were conducted in.

We soon learnt that the party consisted of the King (or Sultan as he is called) of the State of Khiva, which is on the borders of Turkistan, his three sons and Prime Ministers and suite. The State of Khiva, the people of which are Moham-medans, has been raided by the Bolsheviki, and the Sultan, etc., have been carried off as prisoners. I thought at first that the party were Afghans, or were from Tibet, but their headgear puzzled me, and on making enquiries found they spoke Turkish. I must state here that the members of the Mission between them speak thirteen different languages. The Khiva party knew no Russian, so the services of the Mission were asked for by the Commandant, and, in order to help the unfortunate Sultan and party, one of the interpreters translated from Turkish into Russian.

These poor wretches were nearly dead with cold, and squatted in the snow shivering away, not knowing what was happening, and not seeming to care. We took compassion on them and asked them to come up to our room where we served them all with steaming mugs of tea, and gave them some bread. They were most grateful to us, and stayed with us until nightfall, and would have stayed the night, but we induced them to go to a room which had been got ready for them. Every person must be in his own room by roll call and then the sentries who accompany the A. C. check us all. The room Staristor is

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responsible for seeing that all members of their rooms are present for Roll Call. I am the Staristor of our room. The following morning two of the Khiva Princes and a Minister visited us long before any of us had any thoughts of getting up. As we know no mutual language we woke up the interpreter, who started away in Turkish. It was rather an ordeal for him first thing in the morning. We gave our visitors some cigarettes and they then left us, but most of the day the Khivites were in our room, and as they are anything but a clean lot, we are rather afraid that they will bring unwelcome visitors with them. They sit for hours without saying a word, and I say "salaam" and certain Urdu words which are the same as in Turkish and have to leave it at that.

The whole tribe have taken a great fancy to the Mission, and they try to obtain food for gold rings and jewellery from us, but no trading of course takes place, as we have nothing to trade, and even if we had, we would refrain from doing so.

The other morning, the Prime Ministers of Khiva came to the Turkish-speaking interpreter and requested me, through the medium of the interpreter, to accompany him to the Sultan who wished to speak to me.

I complied with the request, and on arrival at the Sultan's "Council Chamber," found the whole Khiva party gathered together. The Sultan after some small talk wished me to convey a certain message from him to the British Government, which I am afraid must not be committed to writing until I do so in my official report to the War Office.

After a long speech His Majesty waited for it to be translated to me, and then asked for my reply, as he earnestly hoped that I would convey his message to the British Government.

I replied that I would certainly comply with his request.

The old man and his Ministers seemed very relieved to have got the matter off their chests, and ended the interview by expressing a cordial vote of thanks, and an invitation to the Mission to visit Khiva as the guests of the State as soon as the Sultan or his heir was installed on the throne once more.

I told the rest of our fellows, and we're all going to avail ourselves of the invitation to visit Khiva! Some people have all the luck.

A lot of the Lettish and Lattish Prisoners say that since Peace has been arrived at between the Soviet and their respective Governments they should be sent home.

A Canadian Jew, who is Staristor of their room, has organised a hunger strike.

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The Commandant told them to call the strike off, and he would present their grievances to the Authorities.

Everyone is laughing to think of a hunger strike in this jug. The strike was automatically cancelled owing to the fact that the Canadian Jew who says he is a British subject (and I think he is) has been sent for by the Vetcheka, and has not returned yet. I shall report this matter to our authorities when we get out.

I have found all kinds of hiding places for these papers.

Every evening we are informed that a search will take place by the Vetcheka. Only two searches have taken place, but nothing has been taken from us.

While in Siberia previous to being captured, I bought a large quantity of Ural Mountain "stones," such as amethysts, beryls, aqua marines, topaz, alexandrites, rubies, etc., and on being captured sewed them all up into a piece of flannel and sewed the flannel into the cuffs of my tunic. The other morning the old actress, who is a great friend of the Mission, noticed that the sleeve required some stitches near the shoulder, and told me that if I would let her have the tunic she would mend it for me. I gave her the tunic, quite forgetting about the stones. Throughout all the searches my stones have never been discovered.

I was sent for by the Commandant, and on arrival at his office saw my tunic on his table and all my stones exposed in a glittering mass. He asked me for my explanation for concealing gems. I replied that these could be bought in the open market at the present moment, and I had every right to have them. He next asked me as to why I had hidden them in my tunic. I said that I was afraid of losing them, and so put them in a safe place where they could not drop out. He then told me that no prisoners were allowed to have such things in their possession, and that he would report the matter to the Vetcheka.

I demanded a receipt for them, and a detailed receipt was made out, and the stones were sewn up again and put into two brown-paper packets and sealed with the office seal in presence of witnesses. The Commandant told me that I must not worry, as he faithfully promised the stones would be returned to me when we left the laager. The woman to whom we had all been so very kind and had given her food is nothing else but a spy, and the other women in the laager are furious with her for giving me away. The explanation of the old wretch is that a sentry saw her with the tunic and took it away from her and discovered the stones, but the women who live in the same room with her, say they saw her cut the lining of my sleeve and take the stones out. I am wild to think that after all these months I have successfully

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retained the stones I should, at this stage, be given away by a woman spy.

The Baroness Ostin-Sarkna has arrived in this laager from the Ivanoffsky. She is determined to find out something about the Mission, but we've let her know that we consider that she is a Vetcheka spy and we want nothing to do with her. She shed crocodile tears at our unsympathetic responses to her sweet advances.

Three of the women in the laager are French. One is a French Red Cross Nursing Sister; we all love her. She is kindness itself, and the other two have married Russians, and, of course, are now Russian subjects.

We heard from one of these two that her husband has recently been shot by the Reds.

They cannot make up their minds whether to go with the French Mission when they leave or not. The authorities have given them the chance of leaving.

Count T. has been taken away to the Vetcheka "bez baggage." We are very fed up about it. He is one of the ten Hungarians whom the Reds have selected to shoot if the Hungarians shoot any of the Hungarian Bolsheviks who have been arrested in Hungary. This is only a sample of the high handedness of the Reds.

We read in the papers two days ago that the Hungarian Government had shot two Hungarian Bolsheviks. Following this announcement Count T. has been carted off.

It is an international scandal that such a thing should be done by these damned Reds.

If there is the slightest chance of these papers being taken I shall destroy them, but I think the danger is passed until we are searched thoroughly before crossing the frontier, and when we get as far as that I can with impunity destroy anything in lieu of giving it up.

The French have received orders to pack up and go. Wild excitement.

In an hour the French were ready and at 9 p.m. marched off under escort of the Vetcheka soldiers. These soldiers look terrifying in the day with their grim-looking headgear and red star, but at night they're enough to give one the creeps, as it is these very fellows, who are never without their revolvers, who raid the rooms and carry off victims.

All the rest of the prisoners were ordered to their rooms, but the French had to pass under our windows on their way out of the laager. We crowded to the windows and yelled and cheered. The Commandant shouted to us to close the window,

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and we only yelled the louder. One of the Vetcheka soldiers thereupon raised his rifle to his shoulder and took aim at us, but since we knew he daren't shoot at us we laughed at him as he looked a first-rate fool when he lowered his pop gun. The French yelled out good-bye to us, and have taken all our names and addresses. They are going to write to all the French papers about us, and stir up everyone they can in their endeavours to get us out. We were very sad indeed when the French left ; we wonder all day long when our turn to leave will come.

The French have been released because their Government threatened to bombard certain Russian ports if all French prisoners were not released at once.

Our good old Navy would do likewise with pleasure if the Labour people at home would let them.

It's the only stuff the Reds understand. Soft soaping is not only useless but harmful. The Russians acknowledge their masters very readily when they realise who their masters are.

Horrocks has got jaundice and has gone off to hospital. He has no luck at all. It is nothing serious, and he hopes to be back in a week or ten days.

The Commandant is very persistent in his endeavours to make us do some work. Large quantities of logs have been brought into the laager for use during the winter. These logs are sawn up and stacked away.

The Commandant says that the cutting up of these logs is for the benefit of the general kitchen and for warming our own rooms, and that being the case we should help to cut them up. I replied that if we were left alone we might cut up a few, but that if he ordered us to work we'd do nothing.

He left it at that, and we sawed up a few logs, but I am afraid that as soon as we got warm we lost our enthusiasm, and as one gets warm in about five minutes sawing wood, it's not much use sawing in this way, and we stopped it altogether.

We were informed unofficially that the Mission would soon be leaving for England. As we have had many rumours to this effect lately, and there have been talks in the papers regarding the exchange of prisoners we worked up a little excitement.

Since the French people left, our food has been brought to the laager by a Danish Red Cross gentleman. Mrs. Harrison is in trouble, we hear, with the Red Authorities and so is unable to bring the stuff herself.

We do not get anything like the stuff the French brought for us, as the D.R.C. man says that he has so little funds available, yet the Madame Charpentier said she was handing all their funds over to the D.R.C. and Mrs. Harrison.

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We were also informed by people in the know that a large consignment of food stuff, cigarettes, and clothes has arrived in Petrograd for the members of the Mission. We asked the Commandant about it, and I wrote a letter to the Foreign Office again asking the Minister of Foreign Affairs to send a representative to see me.

Two Americans came in to the laager to-day. Both excellent chaps : one man is a great lad and has done fine work, but I mustn't put any more than this on paper. A British soldier, Private Grant of the Gloucestershire Regiment has also arrived. Grant was captured at Baku and has been a prisoner there. The British had a very bad time of it as prisoners in Baku. Some forty Naval ratings were captured, and treated very badly.

Grant is very pleased to be with his fellow countrymen, as he has been an isolated prisoner and has been "staying" at the prison in Moscow prior to coming here. He said that the prison authorities did not treat him very badly.

We were all awakened last night and our room, along with others, was searched.

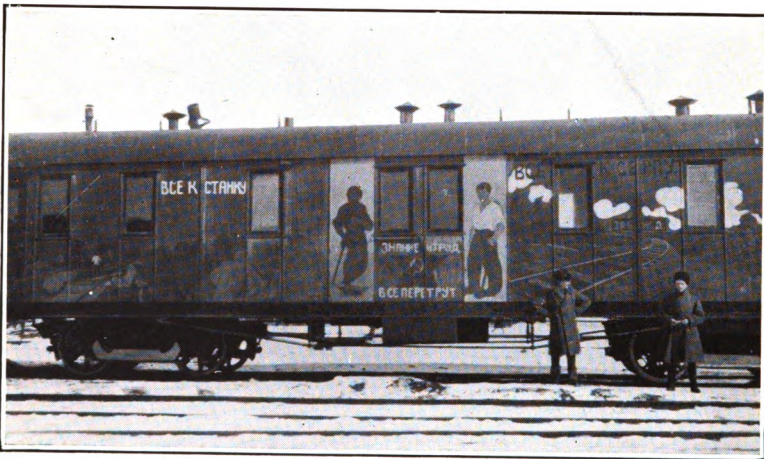
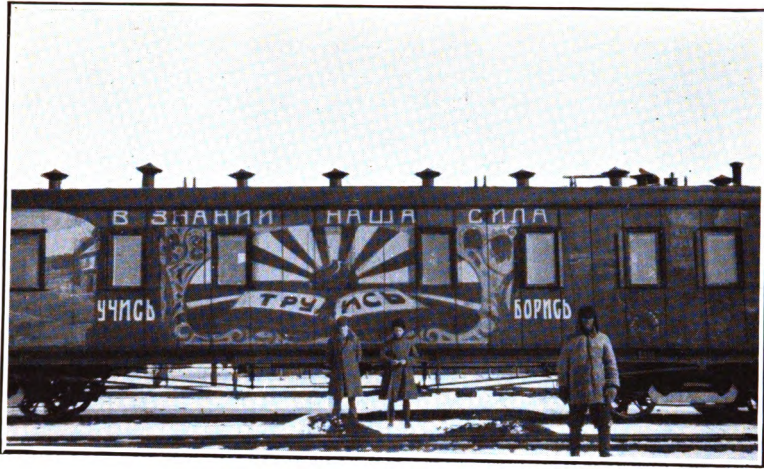
All our razors, other than safety, cameras, etc., were confiscated by the Commandant under instructions of the Vetcheka. We got receipts for everything. I am surprised that our cameras were not taken away long before, as we have made good use of them, as two of us had spare rolls of films. I took some interesting photographs in Siberia after we were captured, and hope they turn out all right. Propaganda trains were very interesting with weird pictures painted on the outside of the train, and I took some snaps of these.

The search party were most polite and civil to us, and since they consisted of the laager staff here, we were not unnecessarily disturbed or searched, and were allowed to retain everything except the articles I mentioned.

These searches are a nuisance, but since we have got nothing worth losing, and papers are not confiscated, we do not worry, and I continue to write up my diary with impunity.

We have a football which has not yet been used, as we play with the old one, and I took the precaution to place all my films wrapped in paper between the bladder and the case, and then blew the ball up tight.

I hope to get all my films out of Russia in this way, as the Reds are very strict at the frontier, and will certainly confiscate all films. I should have lost my films long ago, but the Reds never dreamt of looking for them inside the football, and it was safe to bank on the football not being taken from us, as the Russians



BOLSHEVIK PROPAGANDA TRAIN WHICH DISTRIBUTED PROPAGANDA TO THE PEASANTS AND WORKMEN. TWO BRITISH OFFICERS (PRISONERS) IN THE FOREGROUND. SIBERIA, 1920.

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in general think that to separate an Englishman from his football is to cause his early death !

We have a sing-song most nights. I got hold of a banjo in Krasnoyask, and ever since then, Prickett and self have provided the music, and are wondering what figure we can command from the music halls when we get to London. The others think we might get a tanner to keep away, but are otherwise very kindly disposed towards us and our efforts in the musical line.

The Mission have gone completely off their heads, we are mad—howling mad—with delight ; we have been told officially by a representative from the Foreign Office that *we leave Moscow for England on the 20th*, and I have been allowed to wire home to the British Government to that effect. We cannot stop singing, nothing matters ; everyone loves us and we love everyone ; home is in sight ; we cannot realise it. We are convinced that a true statement has actually been given us at last.

It happened this way. Before we were up this morning a portly gentleman accompanied by an American reporter of sorts walked into our room. The portly gentleman wore riding breeches and leggings, and he greeted us with a “ Good morning, and where is the senior officer ? ” I cheerfully admitted I was he, and asked him to take a pew on my bed, which he did. He then informed me that he had been sent from the Foreign Office to tell us officially that we would leave for England on the 20th October. As the magic words left his lips, the Mission sprang from their beds with a cheer, and the noise for five minutes was deafening.

We then settled down to hear what our visitors, who thoroughly enjoyed the row, had to tell us.

Mr. Naoetava (the portly gentleman) speaking in excellent English, which he had learnt while residing for some years in England, said that he was Minister for the Entente Affairs, and that an exchange of prisoners had been arranged between the British and Soviet Governments, and arrangements would be made for us to leave Moscow on the 20th.

He said that he had recently been in England, and I asked him how he liked London.

Mr. Naoetava replied that he had seen as much of London as I had of Moscow, and for the same reason.

He went on to say that he owes his stay in jug in England to the kind attentions of Sir Basil Thompson of Scotland Yard, and wished me to give Sir Basil his kind regards when I arrived in London.

Mr. Naoetava had a long talk with us, and was most friendly and very witty. He accepted our invitation to stay to “ lunch,”

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and we dished him up some soup (?), and some really quite nice stew. He expressed his surprise at the excellent meal, and said we did ourselves very well. I asked him whether the British Government didn't do their unwilling guests *very very* well indeed, and Mr. Naoetava admitted that he was well looked after and fed, and was struck with the cleanliness and good food of English prisons ; however, such comparison being very favourable to our Government but detrimental to that of our guests, we changed the subject. The American reporter, whose wife had belaboured the Assistant Commandant, came to our room to see Mr. Naoetava to know why he and his wife were being imprisoned.

Mr. Naoetava explained that when reporters exhibit undue zeal in other people's affairs it is sometimes policy to lock them up.

The American (who was a rampant and red-hot Bolshevik in America, and had to leave that country owing to unwelcome attentions from the police) told Mr. Naoetava that he had "given forty dollars to the Red cause in Moscow, and should be released." I then told Mr. Naoetava that the British Government had supplied the bulk of the Red Army with uniforms and boots, and in this case we should never have been imprisoned or even captured. Mr. Naoetava enjoyed the jest, and said that it could hardly be said that the uniforms and boots had been "given," but, all the same, the Soviet Authorities very much appreciated the good things which had so easily fallen into their hands.

Mr. Naoetava, before departing, informed us that some stuff had arrived for us from England, and the packing cases were labelled to the British Mission, and that he would see that the stuff was sent to us at once.

The reaction resulting from all this good news is terrific, and we are like a lot of schoolboys who have been given the treat of their lives instead of an expected good hiding.

I wrote off to old Horrocks at once, and he rose from his couch of illness and came straight to the laager. He said he was very much down in the dumps as the conditions in the hospital were so awful that nothing possibly could have been worse. Everything was filthily dirty ; three patients in a bed, and the hospital rooms used freely as a latrine.

The message from me acted like a wonderful tonic ; he gave a whoop which startled the whole of his ward, and at once insisted on the hospital Commandant sending him back to us. Horrocks has completely got over his jaundice and is looking very fit.

Another officer and myself went to the Vetcheka to fetch the

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remaining baggage we had left there, and everything was delivered to us very civilly and politely. We brought the stuff back in a cart which was paid for by the Laager Commandant with the money he had confiscated from us.

While at the Vetcheka I asked the Commandant of the cells there, to deliver some small packages which I had brought from the laager for Count T. who had left this laager without anything.

The Commandant looked at me very queerly, and did not quite like the idea of my taking an interest in Count T. and seemed annoyed that I had noticed his disappearance. He smelt the dodge on my part to find out something.

However, he told me to leave the things on his table. We consider this only confirms our fears that poor Count T. has been shot. He was such a decent fellow, and answered to the name of Charlie Chaplin. I have promised to bring this case to the notice of the proper authorities, and am giving this information to Charlie Chaplin's relatives, including a brother of his who married the daughter of one of America's most famous millionaires.

We fairly count the hours now, and are wondering if we will go on the 20th or not, as the papers say that we must be across the frontier to meet the Bolshevik prisoners who are being exchanged for us on the 30th October. As it only takes a few days to get to the frontier by train, we possibly may be held here until the 26th ; we all of course hope like blazes that we go on the 20th.

We are all taking many messages out of Russia from prisoners whose relatives have escaped out of Russia to England, but we are very careful to have these messages so worded as to look unimportant, no names or addresses being mentioned.

CHAPTER XII

PRISONERS SET FREE

Well, well, well ! Here we are in Petrograd ! The 20th came and no news of our going.

The afternoon and evening passed and still no news. We however had packed most of our things ready to move without an instant's delay, and had given up hope of leaving that day, when at eight o'clock someone rushed into our room to say that a party of the Vetcheka soldiers had arrived, and evidently had come for the Mission.

Shortly afterwards the Commandant sent word for us to move, and did not we just move ! Our room was besieged by crowds of prisoners who were on the lookout for any things we didn't want. We gave the two French ladies who had elected to remain when the other French left, all the foodstuff, etc., that we could spare, and what these two ladies did not require was gratefully snapped up by the other prisoners. As we were on our journey home, we gave away quite a lot of our pots and pans and some clothing.

We then went to the Commandant's office and received back all the articles confiscated from us, with the exception of my Ural stones, and these the Commandant said he would give to the Commander of our guard and I would receive the stones later on. Two carts arrived to take our kit, and with the two carts leading, we trooped out of the laager, after wishing everyone good-bye.

Singing " Tipperary " at the top of our voices the gates were shut to after us, shutting out from view the crowds of white, pale, and sorrowful faces gazing after us, and we all felt bitterly sorry for these poor wretches, who have no glimmer of hope ; they have no Government to get them out eventually, and have an unthinkable time to go through before the spring ; the terrible winter with its diseases in its train will claim many of these poor men, women, boys and girls.

Every night I have a thought for the poor people we've left behind in the laagers and prisons of Moscow and elsewhere. It's a living death, and I think lucky are the ones who are quickly shot if all they have to look forward to in life is the existence in these places.

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We arrived at the Vetcheka in half an hour after leaving the Andronoffsky Laager, and the same grim gates were opened to receive us, as received the Mission on its arrival in Moscow, and closed behind us, and once more we were in the most terrible and dreaded place in the whole of Russia and Siberia.

We were all escorted into the same room where we were previously shut up, and found a woman and girl and some small children in it.

These were removed to another room, and barring a Russian or two, we had the room to ourselves. We were told by the Vetcheka Authorities that we would presently be sent to the station.

We unpacked a few things and had something to eat, and then produced our instruments. An ex-White officer—a youth of about twenty-two—asked me if “they” were shooting all Deniken’s officers. I replied, “No, of course not,” but, poor devil, I don’t fancy his chance of being much longer on this earth.

Presently the door opened and two men were ushered in. They gaped at us for a minute or so, and then in English asked if we were British. We informed them that we were, and asked them in return who they were.

One replied that they were the male members of the “Four Grave Offenders.”

We had heard that two English women and two men were in the Botirka Prison and had been there for some considerable time.

The two men, who were none other than Messrs. Maxwell and Gibson, of whom, as I say, we had heard repeatedly, asked us what was happening. We replied that we were on our journey home, and probably they had been sent to join us as all prisoners were being exchanged. We gave Maxwell and Gibson some food and tea and continued our concert.

Presently one of the prison officials came into our room, and asked us to stop the music and singing, saying that such a thing was not allowed in the Vetcheka. I should think that even if it was allowed none of the poor wretches confined here would feel like singing, though they brightened up when we started, and our neighbours must have wondered very much at hearing the sing-song. We asked the official as to why we could not sing if we wanted to, and he said that it was the Commandant’s orders.

Maxwell who speaks Russian like one, told the man to go to the Commandant and tell him that the English swine wish to sing.

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The official was very much taken aback, and asked Maxwell as to why he referred to the English as "swine." Maxwell replied that "Comrade" Trotsky in an official speech had referred to the British as "English swine," and any terms used by the great Trotsky were surely the ones to use.

The official said that Trotsky did not mean what he said when he referred to us as swine, and he would go and ask the Commandant for permission for us to sing. As soon as he left the room we started off again.

The man came back presently, and said that the Commandant could not permit the singing. Shortly afterwards Comrade (or Tavarish, which is the Russian for "comrade") Poppoff, the Commandant of the Vetcheka came into our room. Poppoff is a huge man standing 6 feet 2 or 3 inches, and is nearly on a par with the fiend Derzensky for bloodthirstiness.

Poppov, as the word is spelt in Russian, is rightly named. He causes and has caused a staggering number of people to pop off this earth. Though a jest on this subject is out of place, it is such a hackneyed one that it passes unnoticed, and is not as flippant as it sounds. Everyone makes the same joke on hearing the name of Poppoff and what his occupation consists of.

Poppov came to ask us for money to pay for the two carts which brought our luggage from the Andronoffsky Laager to the Vetcheka.

We told Poppov that we had no money. He then asked us why we hired carts if we had not the wherewithal to pay for them.

In reply we reminded Tavarish Poppov that when we first arrived in Moscow he relieved us of large sums of money, and this being the case our suggestion was that he should pay for the carts and deduct the amount from the money he had belonging to us, and return us the balance.

Poppov smiled. We were informed by some of the Vetcheka soldiers afterwards that it was the first time Poppov had been known to smile. Well, Poppov smiled, and withdrew from our room.

In about an hour after our arrival just as we were about to settle down for the night, having made up our minds that we were not going to the station that night, a man came in and asked four of us at a time to go the office to receive back the articles which had been confiscated from us on our previous visit to the place.

These instructions were scarcely given before another man came in and asked us to hand him our receipts as the articles were being brought to us in the room. Some of the articles

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were being returned when orders came for us to "Fall in" for the march to the station.

As Poppov was not going to pay for any more carts, he ordered two Government motor lorries to take our kit to the station.

I demanded the return of our property and was informed that the Commissar who would accompany us to the frontier, would take all our articles and hand them over to us there. We met the other two "grave offenders," one of the ladies of whom was a sister of Maxwell, and the other a friend, a Miss McPhearson.

Miss McPhearson was tired, so she sat on the lorry as also did R.S.M. Walters. Miss Maxwell "fell in" with us, and for the last time we formed fours in Moscow and marched out of the Vetcheka.

We noticed with great satisfaction that our guard were armed with revolvers but no rifles, and carried walking sticks.

The absence of rifles was a good sign, as it went to show that we were no longer under the Vetcheka, but under the civil authorities and were not under close arrest as we had been up to now.

We arrived at the station in due course, and found that the train we should have caught had left. We spent four hours sitting on our baggage, and dragging the whole lot by hand from one platform to another.

Finally, the Commander of the Guard informed us that we could get into two wagons.

There were twenty-two of us, so I divided up the party and the luggage, and we scrambled in on to planks which were set across the breadth of the wagon in two tiers.

We had made journeys like this before, and did not worry at the great discomfort resulting from a crowd in a cattle wagon, and sleeping like sardines on planks surrounded by our baggage, with a wood stove in the centre which continually had to be stoked as it was very cold.

We started off at 2 a.m., and right thankful we were to leave Moscow.

After an uneventful journey of thirty-six hours in these cattle trucks we arrived in Petrograd.

The Soviet Authorities had supplied us with no food whatsoever, and it was fortunate we saved enough for the journey, but then we knew the dear Reds by this time, and their playful ways, and did not run any risks.

We dumped all our kit out on the platform, and beguiled our time by making hot tea and eating bread. We strolled about, and it was fine to feel one could walk about without a bush ape with a rifle and the permanently fixed bayonet in attendance.

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After an absence of some four hours our Commandant, who had gone to report our arrival at the Vetcheka, ordered us to follow him.

We got hold of some platform lorries and loaded up our kit on to them, and lugged them along the platform to the entrance hall.

From there we lifted the stuff across the road on to two trams which had been reserved for us, and when we were all aboard the trams started off, much to the disappointment of the crowd which had become very interested in us. The Commandant informed us that we were not going to the Vetcheka, nor were we being sent to a laager, but would be kept for a few days at the Central Concentration Camp for foreigners. After a jaunt round Petrograd in the trams, we stopped outside a large building in one of the main streets, and presently a crowd of Austrian prisoners came out and carried our baggage in for us.

We then all trooped into the building.

Heavens above ! We are now in a beautiful room with beds having mattresses and clean white sheets and pillow cases. Everything clean and lovely. This place was a hospital and is now a concentration camp for prisoners being repatriated.

We are overjoyed. Everyone is most kind to us, and the matron and doctor-in-charge have given us the run of the place, and we have started in by giving a dance, which was attended by quite a bevy of beauty, and Rooney fairly made the piano produce excellent music. The food is plain but there is lots of it.

The " Four Grave Offenders " have lived in Petrograd for some years and have friends here, and from these sources our larder has been greatly added to. I went to see the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Patrisky. He was very polite and gave me an interview at once. I wanted to know when the Mission would be leaving for the frontier, and he replied in a few days.

I also complained about the non-receipt of our property and my Ural stones, and he promised to make enquiries and let me know the result.

A very large number of women have been enrolled in the Petrograd Militia, and I saw one of these good ladies " in action."

Some man tried to pass into a gateway which was patrolled by a Militia woman with a rifle, etc., complete. All Russian rifles have a permanently fixed bayonet.

The man was called upon to halt, but he walked on. The woman ran after him, and thrusting the point of the bayonet within an inch of the man's waistcoat pocket, ordered him to hop it. The man about turned, and 'opped it quick. The women

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are only peasant girls and, the bush apes informed us, cannot fire their rifles. If these women are anything like the women of the Battalion of Death, they not only know how to fire their rifle, but also how successfully to manipulate the business end of the bayonet.

Crowds of troops drilling in front of the Winter Palace, which I went over.

The beautiful reception room was turned into a large Lecture Hall for Red propaganda. The lovely paintings were covered up with a large red cloth, which our conductor pulled aside and showed us magnificent paintings of the Tzar and his family.

Our conductor had been in the service of the Imperial Family for many years, and he was delighted to see us in uniform with our badges of rank on our shoulder straps—a thing he hadn't seen since the Revolution.

The Tzar's bedroom was a beautiful room, but his bed had been cut to ribbons by bayonets when the rabble were looting the Palace, and looking for hidden valuables.

The Tzarina's bedroom was blue and white, and very lovely. Her bath was a large marble tank, with steps leading down into it, and quite large enough to swim in.

The whole bathroom was marble, with a metal railing round the bath. The billiard room and library had scarcely been touched, and the private photographs were still on the walls. The rooms of the Palace were all beautifully arranged, and painted, with furniture to match. Everything was in keeping, and showed exquisite taste.

I particularly noticed the gold piano, and struck a few of the notes. The piano had been knocked about a bit, but was otherwise in good order, and had a very sweet tone.

I next proceeded down the galleries, and on both sides I saw lovely paintings of the Russian Imperial Family and their ancestors. All these paintings had bullet holes through them, and bayonets had cut some of them to ribbons.

One could quite imagine the scene of the murderous cut-throats and the scum of Russia, rushing through the Palace looting anything they could lay their hands on, and in their frenzy shooting at and bayonetting lovely paintings and other art treasures.

I noticed paintings of members of our royal family ; it gave me a thrill of pleasure to notice that they were intact. Whether these particular pictures were not in such a conspicuous place as the others, or whether the mad brutes could distinguish one painting from another I do not know, but as I say, the paintings

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of our royal family were amongst the comparatively few untouched in the Winter Palace.

Before leaving, I visited the Tzar's reception rooms, and the room of Peter the Great. This was particularly lovely. It was a pale greenish-blue with silver hangings. Literally hundreds and hundreds of the Imperial crest were worked all round the room in all sizes, with silver thread, and the throne was a beautiful piece of work. This room had been damaged along with the others, and the spectators of all classes made no bones about condemning the outrage.

I saw two women crying when viewing the royal private apartments, and it was enough to make anyone turn against the Bolsheviks, and Bolshevism, to stand and look at the Palace, and to contemplate what must have happened to the Imperial family when trying hastily to escape, only to be captured and taken to Ekaterinburg, where, as all the world knows, the Tzar, Tzarina, their little cripple boy, and the beautiful and young grand duchesses, together with a few of their favourite personal suite were butchered and hacked to death in an underground cellar by some four or five of the worst fiends in the world, headed by a Jew*—a Russian or Polish Jew, I'm told, and the lowest the tribe can produce.

I was glad to get out of the Palace, and I was really sorry for the old servant. How he hates the Reds. What a terrible ordeal for him to show people round the palace, which contains so many happy memories for him ! But he prefers to stay as he cannot tear himself away.

We have been to the theatre, and have seen the Russian Ballet at its best.

We are allowed to go where we like, but have to take a Militia man with us in case we are stopped and asked for papers.

These Militia men have no use for the Bolshevik, and are Royalist to the core.

We visited the Mariansk Theatre, and were given the Royal Box to sit in.

I have seen the majority of the London theatres and so have the other fellows, and we agree that for splendour and size none can compare with this theatre. The colouring of the Royal Box is blue and gold, and the rest of the theatre is magnificently decorated, but at the same time not in the least gawdy or overdone.

We had the pleasure of hearing Chaliapin sing. He certainly is the Russian Caruso. In the time of the Tzar, Chaliapin used

* Yurovsky—a Jew, fired the fatal shot ; there is indisputable evidence of this fact.—AUTHOR.

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to kneel on the stage and sing the Russian National Anthem so beautifully that the audience wept, and the Tzar, and especially the Tzarina, made a great fuss of Chaliapin, who was a favourite at Court.

Chaliapin now ends the programme by coming on the stage with a red flag, and on bended knees sings the "International," but I do not think people trouble to weep. Possibly Chaliapin is compelled to do this, but it seems to be most disloyal to his dead Emperor for him to do so.

The managers of the different theatres and the star actor and actresses are all very kind to us, and have offered us the best seats in the theatres free if we care to go. We are going on from Petrograd the day after to-morrow, having been here a week.

I have spoken to sailors from Kronstadt. These people are fed up with the Bolsheviks, and prophesy a "turn over," and ultimately a White Republican Government.

I saw the Minister of Foreign Affairs again, and he said our property would be sent to the frontier or to the British Foreign Office in London. He told me that it was owing to his good graces that we were kept out of a laager in Petrograd as the Vetcheka did not like the idea of letting us loose about the city.

Not a shop of any description is open in Petrograd ; nor were they in Moscow.

Snow lies on the streets and pavements, and those shop windows which are not broken are boarded up, and the whole city resembles a deserted and dead one.

Petrograd before the war, I am told by many English people, was one of the gayest cities in the world, and no one started amusing himself until 10 p.m., and everything was in full swing throughout the night ; people slept during the day.

And now ! I cannot put down all that the working classes tell me, but tinker, tailor, soldier, sailor, all say " Enough of this hell on earth ; let us get back to the good old times," and a lot of them are anything but pleasant to look at when they say it.

There are very many people who are extremely anxious to leave Russia, but are unable to do so, as no Russian is permitted to leave the country, and no one dares to ask for permission to do so, as they would promptly be put into prison as counter-revolutionists.

Some English women who have married Russians, and are, therefore, Russian subjects have asked members of the Mission to marry their daughters according to Soviet marriage laws. This means that the girls would have the right to be classed as

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British subjects, and once across the frontier would go their own way.

Many of the British who were in Russia did go through the Soviet marriage ceremony, and took the girls across the frontier, and some fell in love with the girls and married them according to our marriage laws.

It would be impossible to take a girl across the frontier and ditch her there, and equally impossible to take her to England unless she had relatives to go to.

Some beautiful and talented girls wanted someone to take them out of Russia by marrying them, promising that as soon as the frontier was crossed they would not trouble their "husbands" further. None of the members of this mission are marrying men, and have not experienced any difficulty in avoiding the subject of marriage.

An English lady who has done an infinite amount of good work for the destitute British subjects passing through and residing in Petrograd, came to see us to-day. She is going to accompany us as far as the frontier, and has promised to try and get us some provisions. Mrs. Froom, the lady in question, has lived in Russia some years and speaks Russian fluently, and she has a great deal of influence with the local authorities who are quite satisfied that Mrs. Froom is only out to do good by helping British refugees. We leave Petrograd to-morrow. This is our last night in Russia, and we are so happy that we cannot sit still, so dance and sing songs, accompanied by the piano.

October 30th.—Hurrah, and cheers! At last we are safe, high and dry in Terijoki, Finland. We left Petrograd yesterday morning, two trams coming to fetch our kit and ourselves.

We said good-bye to our pals at the camp, and thanked them all very much for their kindness to us.

On arrival at the station it was found that for some reason or other the Mission must be pushed on quickly, so an engine with two cars was arranged for as a special train to take our party. How excited we all were to think that we would be across the frontier in less than two hours, and all the more joyful when informed that special Commissars were accompanying us to see that we were not searched or interfered with. Why all this sudden consideration, we wonder? All my papers belonging to the diary are safe, and I did not tear them up, as I might have had to do, had there been a search. My films came through in the football all right, and are quite undamaged.

An hour after leaving Petrograd our train arrived at rail head, where carts were waiting to take our baggage as far as the actual Finnish frontier.

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We had a walk for about fifteen minutes, and then came in sight of the frontier.

Oh, heavenly sight ! We saw the Finnish guard on the other side of the wire fencing.

The frontier was marked by a small stream which was spanned by a footbridge.

On both sides of the stream was a wire fence marking the respective Russian and Finnish territory.

At each end of the bridge stood soldiers, Finnish on one side and the Bolsheviks on the other. The centre of the bridge was neutral ground, and on this spot stood the British Representative who had been deputed to receive us.

He called out our names after the Reds had checked us off, and one by one we passed, first a Red Commissar who checked us, and then our own people, after passing whom we stepped on to Finnish territory and were free men.

We grasped each others' hands and congratulated everyone in turn. The Finnish guards *did* look smart in their greyish uniforms and tin hats, and it was a treat to hear a sharp word of command after all these months of sloppy business with bush apes.

We trudged from the frontier to the railway station, a distance of about two miles through the snow, and on arrival we again got into an excited state. There in the refreshment room we saw clean-looking Finnish waitresses in white caps and aprons. All looked rosy and plump, and the whole effect, after months of viewing thin, pale people in rags, can be imagined. This was not all. The counter was laden with white, yes, white bread with butter. Also there were plates of porridge with plenty of rich milk, and also sugar. To describe the scene would take too long, but we just ate and ate and ate, and the waitresses seemed pleased to see us enjoying our meal so much. I shall never for the rest of my life forget that meal.

As dogs were not allowed to be brought into Finland, we were all in a great stew about Teddy. His owner decided to shoot him at the frontier rather than give him up.

We resolved to make a desperate effort to smuggle him through and started by emptying a large black hand-bag into which we stuffed Teddy. While carrying the bag across the bridge past the Finnish guards Teddie commenced to whine, so some of us started to talk very loudly and whistle and hum, and we managed to drown Teddie's whine.

After the meal we were all taken to the Customs Office to be searched for Bolshevik propaganda and money. By a great piece of manœuvring and handing the black bag from hand to

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hand round the Customs officials Teddy was passed out successfully with the checked baggage. Of course, the Customs Officials were not strict with us, otherwise we could not have done this trick.

We left the station and arrived at Terijoki at night, and were rapidly driven from the station in sleighs to our quarantine camp.

We have to remain in quarantine for fourteen days, after which if no lice are discovered in any of the party we will go on to England.

We guarantee there will be no lice, and in fact there have been none since leaving Moscow.

The camp consists of wooden houses, which, prior to the Revolution, were beautifully furnished summer resorts of rich Russians from Petrograd and Moscow. These houses stand surrounded by fir trees and five minutes walk from the blue waters of the Finnish Gulf. A prettier spot I've seldom seen.

There is snow on the ground, but the weather is warmer and most of it has melted.

Three of us went out in a motor boat, and had a look at Kronstadt from a very safe distance ; it was bitterly cold, as the sea near the shore was frozen over, and we had to cut our way through the ice. When the sea freezes over many people will escape out of Russia across the ice, and the Finnish authorities are very unhappy about it ; they do not like the Russians, whom they are treating very badly indeed.

We were told to diet ourselves, and keep off meat for five days. Women come round to the house dragging sleighs full of good stuff, which we hadn't seen for ages. We have thrown all advice on this subject of dieting to the wind, and are fairly gorging ourselves on good stuff.

I find that the Mission is being exchanged for Barbusshkin and party.

Many British and other people claiming to be British subjects are in quarantine in other houses. Some of us have received replies from our people to telegrams we all sent off.

Only two fellows have received no replies.

Imagine our state of mind, not having heard from our people and relatives for over fifteen months. We patiently await to hear whether they are alive or dead, and our hearts almost stop beating as we tremblingly open our telegrams. Horrocks, Georgik, and myself pushed off to Wieburg having passed out of quarantine.

We were examined one by one, and of course no insects were discovered.

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After being herded together for so many months, our one ambition is to get away in a room all to ourselves, and we all three therefore at Wieburg engaged three of the largest bedrooms in the hotel. Enormous rooms they are, too, but the stillness of sleeping by oneself seems most uncanny, but don't we sleep? The beds I find are a bit too soft, and at first I was too comfortable to sleep, but now it's an effort to keep awake.

Wieburg is a very pretty place, and there is a heavenly spot a few miles out with lakes, dells, small rocky mountains, and old towers. A wonderful sight worth going many miles to see.

We left Terijoki on November 17th.

We should have been in Terijoki much longer awaiting for transport, but the British Navy hearing that we were in Terijoki telegraphed to the British Legation at Helsingfors, saying that they would take the British officers and men from Helsingfors to Copenhagen, from where we could easily get on.

We had to leave our Hungarians and the "Four Grave Offenders" behind, but they are coming on, and we have all arranged to meet in London and have a great "bust up."

The Mission was met at Helsingfors by Major Scales, D.S.O., who had already journeyed to Terijoki on our arrival there to greet us, and he took us to breakfast and afterwards I accompanied him to the Embassy, where I had a long chat with the British Minister.

All the officers were entertained to lunch at the Embassy, and the N.C.O.'s and men were given a great spread, so they told me, at a big hotel. That evening we went down to the wharf, and presently a steam pinnace in charge of a Naval Officer drew up and took the whole Mission on board. In about fifteen minutes we arrived at the flag-ship of Vice-Admiral Sir James Fergusson, and I was asked to go up first.

On arrival on deck of H.M.S. *Delhi*, after saluting the quarter-deck, I saluted the Admiral, who was waiting with all the ship's officers to receive us.

The rest of the Mission came up the gangway one at a time, and were introduced to the Admiral. The men of H.M.S. *Delhi* then let out a ringing cheer, which we acknowledged with a salute.

As the *Delhi* cannot accommodate us all, two officers are going off to a destroyer which is accompanying us to Copenhagen.

The Admiral has two suites of rooms, a cabin he uses when the ship is at anchor, and another he uses while at sea.

I was placed in the sea cabin to commence with, and the other officers were accommodated by the Captain and Commander, and so on.

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Three of us fed in the Admiral's Mess, and the rest in the Ward Room.

When the *Delhi* weighed anchor, the Admiral took me on the bridge with him, and I have never been so interested in my life. Whilst at sea, for our benefit, gun practice was indulged in, the destroyer being used as a target "with sights off," as we could see the shells bursting astern of her. A depth charge was also released for our benefit, and I cannot see what chance a submarine can have when within a hundred yards' radius of one of these charges.

At a depth of thirty feet, and a distance of over fifty yards some of the crockery in the wardroom was smashed, also the hanging lamp. Of course, we were taken to every part of the ship. The officers were determined to entertain us and, though very busy, spent all their spare time in taking us round and keeping us amused.

The N.C.O.'s and men tell me that they are having a magnificent time on the lower deck.

We received a marconigram asking all the officers to lunch at the Embassy at Copenhagen, and asking the men to go up there on arrival to see the Ambassador. I replied, accepting with pleasure.

When the ship arrived at Copenhagen, we all went ashore, and the officers lunched with a large gathering at the Embassy.

After lunch we returned to the ship and prepared to leave for the station, as we were going overland, and again catching a boat for Harwich.

After tea taxis arrived on the docks and quite a large crowd of the Danish public gathered on the wharf to see the cruiser.

The ship's company assembled and the Marine Band struck up "Auld Lang Syne." We wished the Admiral and all the ship's officers good-bye, and thanked them for the wonderful time they had given us. We were given three hearty cheers, and responded to them with as much noise as fourteen throats could muster, and then went down the gangway.

Good old Navy. They're all the same, and nothing we can say is too good for them.

The taxis took us to the station, where representatives from the British Legation saw us off.

We had a comfortable night journey in the train, and boarded the ship at 6 a.m. for Harwich. The ship was most comfortable, and we had a concert on board. A very famous Danish singer was on board and was on his way to England to sing at Covent Garden, where he was well known. The passengers induced me to approach the singer for a song, saying he would oblige if I

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asked him. I did so, and he most willingly complied and we were all treated to some beautiful singing.

We arrived at Harwich at six next morning, and disembarked on England's shore once again.

Teddie was sent into quarantine, and is still there. We were overjoyed to see everything English again, and Rooney ran up to the first policeman we saw and wrung his hand.

We went off to the station and were seated in the train for London town, when the Harwich police 'phoned me up to say that arrangements had been made to receive us, and officers were coming from Colchester, and we should go by the train arranged for us, which was a later one.

We sent our kind regards to everyone concerned, and told them that we were in a train and had no intention of getting out, and the quicker the train got us to London the better we would like it. We dodged any meetings at Harwich as the train left shortly afterwards, and within a short time, during which we were as merry as sandboys, we arrived in London.

There were numerous reporters there to meet us, and these good people took flashlight photographs of the party and begged for our "story." As we had no money and were filthily dirty and hungry, we were not in the mood to furnish dope, and I went off with Georgik and reported our arrival at the War Office, who were expecting us by a later train.

Most of the party were demobilised that same afternoon, and the rest put on long leave—three months Russian leave and two months prisoner-of-war leave.

And so my diary of the "trip" draws to a close.

Here I am in London, and cannot realise that I am high and dry. I keep on expecting a night search, and am surprised to see no one wearing a revolver.

Hundreds of things require getting used to again. The food! I'll never during the rest of my days, jib at anything which it is possible to eat. Anyone who grumbles at good wholesome food should think of the millions of men, women, aye, and children, who would gladly eat cooked potato peelings from the gutter, and these people, mind you, who were once upon a time the "fairest in the land."

And a cigarette again, Mon Dieu! In fact, life is wonderful!

I had to submit evidence in front of Lord Emmott's Committee, and he informed me that my statements only bore out what others had told him.

I have not recorded my opinions about Bolshevism, nor have I tried to explain what the aims and objects are. I have simply maintained this private diary.

HELD BY THE BOLSHEVIKS

I have been asked to lecture on Bolshevism, and to write up stories for different magazines and papers, but am much too busy to do anything of that sort yet.

My diary does not, and of course, could not, contain anything like a complete record of incidents which happened to us throughout our experiences. Perhaps one day I will write an account of "Happenings" which I dare not put in this diary, and then only when I know that the persons concerned are no longer in danger.

As it is, I have incurred a very grave risk to myself in maintaining this diary, but I had taken the precaution carefully to hide dangerous notes, and was prepared at all times instantly to destroy them should there be a risk of having to deliver them up.

I also took the precaution to write in red ink all sorts of twaddle against the dangerous bits in case the Reds got hold of my diary. They would see that the comments in red ink washed out anything I said against them.

As I was not conducting a propaganda scheme, anything mentioned in this diary is fact or based on fact, and I have not hesitated to note crimes against the Whites as well as the Reds.

However, all is well that ends well, and I have promised to give each member of the British Mission to Siberia a copy of this diary and a copy of the numerous snapshots I have taken. Before all the party scattered over the globe to Canada, to the Argentine, India, Ireland, etc., we had a great dinner at the Café Royal, where old Boon met us all again, and then we parted, some of us for ever. But as long as any of us are alive, we never will forget one item of the dreadful, though unique, time we spent in Siberia and Russia, both before and after being captured, and we one and all say we would not have missed it for the world.

Our photographs I see have appeared in the picture papers, but no account of our experiences.

To crown all the joy of getting out of Russia alive, I have received a topping letter from the Army Council, and this letter I will keep amongst my most valued and treasured possessions.*

* Copy of letter from War Office sent under separate cover :—

COPY.

War Office,
London, S.W.1.
22nd March 1921.

0149/9888 (C.1).

SIR,—I am commanded by the Army Council to convey to you their appreciation of the very important services rendered by you in directing

PRISONERS SET FREE

One final note. On arrival in Terijoki I received a letter from King, the American reporter, to say that he has got out the first part of my diary safely, and he gave it me on my arrival in London, so I have the whole thing complete now, and that being the case I will now close it, and open up another one when I trek eastwards once more, but I hope I may never again have an opportunity of keeping a diary containing a description of a retreat which puts the famous Retreat from Moscow in the shade, coupled with experiences of Russian prison life in the hands of the Bolsheviks.

the return of the British Military Mission through Russia, under most difficult and trying conditions.

The Council feel that it was due to your initiative and firmness in the relations of the Mission with the Soviet Government that your party was eventually able to leave Russia in safety.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) B. B. CORBETT.

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W. H. SMITH & SON
STAMFORD STREET
L O N D O N, S. E.

